

HIS BIG BROTHER



BY LEWIS AND MARY THEISS

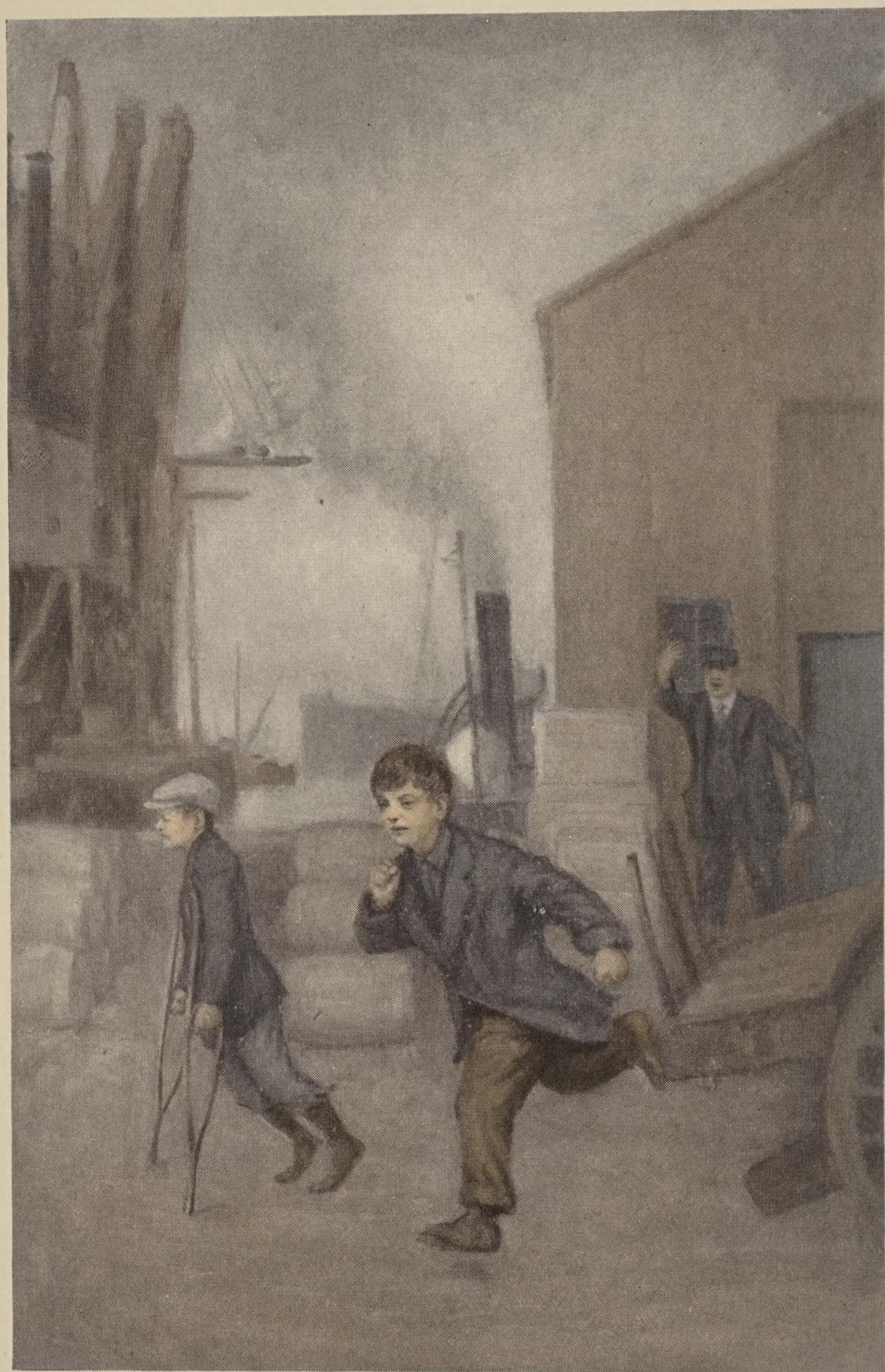


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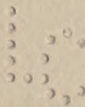


His Big Brother

*A Story of the Struggles and Triumphs
of a Little "Son of Liberty"*

By
^{Theiss}
LEWIS AND MARY THEISS

ILLUSTRATED BY
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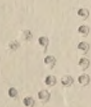


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HIS BIG BROTHER



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To
Ernest K. Coulter,
*founder of the Big Brother Movement,
whose life is an inspiration to his
grown-up as well as to his little friends,
this book is dedicated*

FOREWORD

ALTHOUGH it is undoubtedly true that fiction, truthfully written, is truer than fact—because fiction sets forth the general truths of life, whereas fact illustrates life only in certain particular cases—nevertheless there are some persons for whom a story has an added interest if it is the recital of actual occurrences. Should any such persons chance to read this story, it will interest them to know that the tale of Little Joe, though in no sense a biography, is the history of a New York street urchin.

Little Joe is drawn after a real boy. That boy, like the youthful hero of this book, ran away from his stepfather's canal-boat because he was denied his freedom. For many months he eked out a rat-like existence on the streets of New York. The picture of Little Joe is a reproduction of that lad's likeness, though no words could really describe the pitiable plight or the wretched raggedness of that little waif. Like Little Joe, this New York ragamuffin sank lower and lower as he battled against overwhelming odds, and was saved to decency and usefulness only by the helping hand of a prosperous business man. Many of the things that happen to Little

Joe actually happened to the original. Some of the incidents occurred to other street urchins. So that, though "His Big Brother" is wholly fictitious, it is nevertheless a true story—as true, the authors hope, as any fiction.

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HIS BIG BROTHER

CHAPTER I

A STRIKE FOR LIBERTY

JOE WAINRIGHT sat on the roof of the cabin of the coal barge *Mattie Ford*, rebelliously beating a tattoo with his heels against the side of the cabin. The coal dust was a quarter of an inch thick, but Joe paid no attention to that. He could hardly grow any blacker than he was and besides he had lived in the thick of coal dust for three months. Even now a train load of coal fresh from the mines was pouring down long iron chutes into the hold of the *Mattie Ford* in thunderous cascades that insistently demanded attention. Yet coal was the last thing Joe was thinking of.

His attention was at present centred on a game of ball that he could see in progress a few hundred feet away on the flat Jersey meadow, just beyond the great terminal coal-yard. As he watched the game, his heels beat faster and faster against the cabin wall. He frowned and ran his blackened fingers through his curly, brown hair, thereby leaving an extra smudge of

black across his broad forehead. At this particular moment Joe desired nothing so much in the world as to get into that game of ball.

Yet he made no move to leave his perch. Instead he glanced angrily at his stepfather, Charles Hawkins, who was sprawled lazily in the warm September sunshine on the opposite edge of the cabin roof. Almost ever since Joe's mother had married this man three months previously, Joe had been looking at him angrily. And the reason was ever the same. Joe wanted his freedom. He wanted to go ashore and play with the other boys. Just now he wanted to join in the baseball game. But three months of bitter experience had taught him that he yearned in vain.

Even now he was enjoying unwonted liberty. The privilege of being on deck where he could breathe the fresh air, feel the warm sunshine, and see the stirring sight of the busy life in New York harbor was one he had rarely enjoyed during his three months aboard the *Mattie Ford*. Within a week after Joe's mother had wedded Hawkins, the coal barge captain had shown a growing dislike both to Joe and to Joe's crippled brother Henry—a dislike which he had vented by caging them in the tiny cabin. At first he kept them below decks only when the coal barge was journeying through the tossing waters of the Bay, deep-laden with her black cargo; and in explanation he had said that

he feared for their safety should they come on deck. But when he saw how amazed and restless the youngsters were, like active young animals in a cage, he extended his restrictions and kept them in the cabin most of the time.

As Joe looked at his stepfather now, the latter glanced furtively back at Joe, and a smile flitted across his scarred and reddened countenance. Joe noted the look. He knew that the man was enjoying his discomfort. In all his eleven years of life Joe had never before known such treatment. That gloating smile made his bitterness all the more bitter.

Joe's mind went back to the days before he had had to submit to the will of this hulking tyrant. He thought of the happy days in Alabama before his own father died, of the neat and comfortable little home, bowered in vines, and set in a garden of eternal color, where he had passed all the days of his young life before his mother sickened as his father had done, and had returned for support to this home of her girlhood. He thought of the days when, with his brother Henry and his sister Helen, he had played under the live-oaks and the oleanders, and how he and Helen had brought flowers and blossoms and scarlet clusters of holly berries and festoons of Spanish moss to their crippled brother as he sat playing in the shade. He could almost hear the wind sighing through the piney woods.

He could almost smell again the sweet fragrance of the myriad woodland blossoms. In his mind's eye arose a picture of the little white cottage with the roses clambering over it, where he had lived.

The only home he knew now was this grimy coal barge. The only odors that came to his nostrils these days were the tang of the salt harbor water, too often tainted with decaying refuse, and, when the wind blew right, the sickening smell from the garbage dumps a few blocks below the *Mattie Ford's* usual berth at the foot of Barrow Street in Manhattan.

And he was held fast to it all. He could not get away, even for a little time. Rarely could he come on deck. He could not even get out here on the Jersey meadow for an hour's game of ball. He must live like a captive squirrel, fretting his life out in his narrow prison. Everywhere was happiness but not for him. Here was this marvelous city he had heard of all his life, which he had looked forward to seeing with keenest pleasure—and which he knew only as a bird in a cage knows the forest. Like Tantalus he was never allowed to grasp the joys with which he was surrounded. And there were the blows and curses—sometimes, alas, for his mother! At thought of them Joe's eyes gleamed afresh with anger. Yet he could see no relief. He was chained to it all like a slave to a galley. It must go on and on and on.

The thought was more than Joe could endure. Tears came into his wide-set blue eyes. But not for the world would he have his companions see them. With his grimy hand he dashed the drops away, leaving an added streak of black on his strong little nose. He turned his back on his lounging companion. The tattoo of his heels ceased. He dropped to the deck of the barge and scurried into the cabin.

"I won't stand it any longer, I won't, I won't!" he exclaimed, beating the air with his fists. Yet even under the stress of angry indignation he voiced his protest in a low tone. Hard experience had taught him what happened to youthful rebels on the coal barge *Mattie Ford*.

"What is it now, Joe?" inquired his mother, as she looked up with a despairing sigh from the low chair in which she sat near the stove, paring potatoes for supper. "What has he done"—the question was interrupted by a dry hacking cough—"what has he done to you now?" And coughing again she moved still closer to the fire.

"Nothin'," replied Joe, "but I want to go out there and play ball. I want to go ashore and do something. I want to get off this boat." And now the tears stood frankly in his eyes. Joe made no move to wipe them away. They were tears of anger, and Joe did not care if his folks in the cabin did see them.

"Poor boy!" sighed his mother. "I am awfully sorry, Joe. I'll speak to your father again. Maybe——" She did not finish the sentence. Instead she folded her hands and sighed impotently.

"It ain't fair," went on Joe angrily. "I didn't do anything to him, but he keeps me locked up like a dog."

"Your father says he has to shut you up to keep you out of trouble," pleaded Mrs. Hawkins, in defense of the man she had married.

"It's a lie," retorted Joe. "And he ain't my father, and I won't stand it any longer."

Now the mother's eyes went moist. She looked at Joe pityingly, made as though to speak, then rose and hurried into the other part of the little cabin, set off by board partitions, which they called by courtesy "the other room." There she threw herself upon the bunk, barely six feet long, which filled one entire side of the room.

Helen, who had been playing with Henry on the floor, arose, picked up the pan of potatoes her mother had set down, and quietly went on with the work of preparing them. She was fourteen years old—two years older than Henry and three years older than Joe. During the recent months of her mother's illness she had developed rapidly in womanly qualities, as it had become necessary more and more to relieve her mother

of the slight labors of the household. To Henry she was a little mother, but to Joe she was more like a chum, despite the difference in their ages. For Joe, almost from his babyhood, had been the defender and protector of his crippled brother and in consequence had early developed a manly independence that made him seem much older than he really was. And though he came from a family of the poorer class he had imbibed ideas of chivalry and kindness toward women, the weak, and dumb animals, that were uncommon in a boy of his age.

Joe stood by the window, his face dark with anger. His anger impelled him to do something, but he could not walk up and down the cabin floor, for Henry occupied all the room. Joe could give vent to his feelings only with his hands and arms. From time to time he shook his little fists.

"It's too bad, Joe. I am sorry," said his sister gently. She got up and laid her hand on his shoulder. Joe looked at her understandingly. The tear-drops in his eyes welled and fell.

"I won't stand it another day. I'm goin' to run away," he confided to her. His glance rested on Henry. "Then I suppose *he'll* get it instead," he reflected aloud, nodding his head toward the cripple. For a moment he stood in deep thought. "I'll take him with me," he announced. "That's what I'll do."

"Oh, Joe!" said his sister. "What will become of us? And what will we do without you?"

"I don't know," replied Joe. "But he won't beat you; and we'll get along somehow. I'll tell you what ——"

But before Joe could tell his sister anything further, a heavy footfall was heard on the deck. Both children jumped. Helen went back to her potato paring. Joe slid down on the floor beside his brother. Then the door opened and the towering form of Mr. Hawkins appeared. He stooped and thrust his head through the doorway. "Come out here, and be quick about it," he said, looking at Joe. "She's almost full."

Joe scrambled out on deck. The cataract of coal had almost ceased. All but one of the several compartments now bulked high with the glistening black particles. A thousand tons of anthracite had rattled down the chutes, and now the lumbering, snub-nosed craft sat deep in the water. A few minutes more would see the last compartment filled. Already the tug that was to tow the barge to her dock was fussing about, puffing busily as it came alongside and made fast to the great scow.

"Get a hold of those hatches," ordered Mr. Hawkins.

Joe helped his father adjust and fasten the heavy covers of the bins. He scrambled over the heaps of coal and along the raised ridge-beam between the

sloping hatches with a dexterity that, coupled with the mischief that usually peeped out of his blue eyes, might have afforded some justification for Mr. Hawkins' contention that it was necessary to lock Joe up to keep him out of trouble. In a very short time every cover was in place. Mr. Hawkins yelled to the men ashore to "cast off," and immediately the *Mattie Ford* began to plough heavily through the waves.

Ordinarily the trip to Manhattan was made with open hatches; but to-day the wind was kicking up such a sea that Mr. Hawkins was unwilling to take any chances. In rough weather the waves sometimes swept completely over the bow of the boat, and a few seas in her loaded hold would lay the *Mattie Ford* on the bottom of the Hudson.

Mr. Hawkins made sure that everything was tight, then scrambled up on the hatchway out of reach of the water that was already beginning to dash high against the bow. Joe started to do the same. There was something so pleasantly exciting about the prospect of a battle with the waves that he forgot his anger and prepared to surrender himself wholly to the joy of an unexpected freedom. But before he was half-way up the hatch, the coarse voice of Mr. Hawkins reached his ears.

"Get in the cabin," shouted that individual. "You'd be in the Bay in two minutes out here, and I'll be

damned if I'm going overboard for any little devil like you !”

For Mr. Hawkins, bully though he was, had the virtues of his class. Had Joe fallen overboard, he would have been after him in a second—and whipped him in consequence the minute he got him back on deck.

The bright look vanished from Joe's face; the light fled from his eyes. He went back to the cabin gloomier than ever. Nor did he find there aught to cheer him.

His mother had risen from the bed, and was again sitting in the chair by the stove, her face buried in her hands, the picture of misery. She glanced up to see who was entering. Joe walked straight over to his mother and slipped his arm around her neck.

“What is it, mother ?” he asked.

Mrs. Hawkins sighed. “I was so in hopes that we wouldn't get back to-day,” she said.

Joe understood. It was pay-day. If the *Mattie Ford* could have been detained until the morrow, her captain would have drawn his pay in the morning and Joe's mother would have had an even chance with the saloon-keeper across the way. But now the *Mattie Ford* would reach her dock just before the night whistles blew. Her captain would draw his month's pay, and —— Joe did not like to think of the rest. Possibly it meant another beating for himself. He

knew it meant another hungry month like the present, for the potatoes that Helen had just finished slicing were the only food left on the boat. And for a week past there had been little to eat except potatoes.

Joe's face went blacker than ever. But this time he gave vent to his feelings in no violent gestures. Instead he kissed his mother.

"Never mind, mother," he said, trying to comfort her. "When I grow up I'll take care of you. You won't always have to live on a coal barge. And if I could only get a job you wouldn't have to go hungry any longer."

Thereat Mrs. Hawkins broke down completely and cried. Joe's little face showed keen distress. "Don't cry, mother," he said with an awkward attempt at a caress. "I'll find you something to eat the minute we get ashore."

"Oh, Joe!" replied his mother. "I am not hungry. You do not understand." And she fell to crying again softly.

A pregnant silence came over the little family. Joe looked sadly puzzled and disturbed. Never, until these last three months, had he seen grown-up people cry. This tearfulness on the part of his mother was very terrible to Joe. He did not know what to do about it. His sister did not seem to be at all surprised, but she held her tongue. And so the little group con-

tinued, the mother with her face in her hands, Helen sitting silent on another chair, Little Henry shuffling about uneasily on the floor at his play, and Joe standing puzzled and distracted by the window.

At first he did not see the rolling waves, with their feathery caps of white and the sun glinting on their smooth upward slopes. He was unconscious of the life in the harbor and of the stately ships sailing to and fro. Presently a fast-going tug passed them and the high rolling waves she left behind her came slap against the side of the low-lying barge, and splashed high in the air. Joe's window was drenched with the salt spray, and some of the flood trickled inside the casement. Joe awoke with a start.

The *Mattie Ford* was well over toward the Jersey shore, heading for her berth at the foot of Barrow Street. Through the window Joe saw a wonderful picture. Ahead of them on the right loomed the great city of Manhattan. Its grime and dinginess were disguised by distance. The great buildings reached heavenward with impressive grandeur. One by one they detached themselves from the general mass as the boat moved along, and stood distinct in their individual beauty. The sun, now low in the west, lighted up the tall shafts with rays of gold. A thousand windows glittered with flame. Cornices and spires sparkled and shone. New York had become a city of fire. The

noise, the sordidness, the incessant din of traffic, were wiped away by distance. Only the glory remained. It was thrilling, wonderful.

Even little Joe could feel the appeal of it. His heart beat strangely as he looked. It was the stirring of ambition, though Joe did not recognize it as such. But vaguely he understood that this great city, this fairy creation of the hands of man, was calling to him. Vaguely he began to think of the years to come, of the fights to be won, the things to be achieved, the heights to be climbed. For what? With a shock he remembered that he had just promised his mother a crust of bread.

He turned and looked about the dingy little cabin. There was no need to do so, for he could have told from memory the location of every knot-hole and crack. Yet something impelled him to glance around the room, just as a departing traveler is led to take a last survey of scenes that he knows by heart. Joe could not see through the wooden partitions into the "other room." But he knew that the comfortless bunk occupied one part of it, while the few garments of his mother and of Mr. Hawkins hung on pegs in the other part, with one lone chair standing beneath.

In the part of the cabin in which Joe stood, the stove and some tiny closets occupied most of one side of the room, while a table, the steps leading to the deck, and

another closet in a corner filled the opposite side. There were just chairs enough, including the one in the bedroom, to go around. In a corner, rolled into a tight cylinder, were two thin mattresses made by Mrs. Hawkins of straw and sheeting, on which the three children slept. The steps led to the after deck, which extended only a few feet behind the cabin, with no guard-rail to prevent one from tumbling overboard. Toward the stern and on either side tiny windows let light into the little cabin. A broken mirror hung near one of these windows, and on the rear wall, tilted at an angle, was the sole attempt at ornament—a cheap print of Pharaoh's Horses. For Mr. Hawkins was as much addicted to "the ponies" as he was to the bottle. A ragged piece of oilcloth was the sole floor-covering. The woodwork had once been painted white but the coal dust that now covered everything thick had long since turned it dark. So tiny was this little living-room that the sprawling Henry occupied all of the available floor space. And it was here in this dingy, cramped, little compartment that Joe and his brother had been prisoners these weeks past and were like to be these weeks to come, unless ——

Joe clinched his little fists, but glancing at his mother, he remained silent. He looked at Henry. Then he turned again and peered out of the window, apparently lost in thought.

Presently the silence was broken by Mrs. Hawkins, who wiped her eyes with the hem of her tattered apron, and rose to fix the fire. "I'll do it, mother," said Helen. Mrs. Hawkins sat down again but even this slight exertion had set her to coughing once more.

Helen raked the fire and sprinkled some fresh coal over it. Whatever else the dwellers on the *Mattie Ford* may have lacked, they did not lack warmth. Coal was free to them. And that was fortunate, for weak Mrs. Hawkins, with her telltale cough, could not long have survived her return to the North had she suffered from cold also. As it was the raw air of the waterfront set her to coughing whenever a blast struck her from the open door.

Moving with the tide, the *Mattie Ford* had come swiftly from the great coal terminal and was already abreast of the lower end of the city. They would soon reach their dock. Helen set the potatoes over the glowing coals and stirred them as they began to sizzle. The *Mattie Ford* slowed up when she neared Barrow Street, then was shunted into her dock close up against the stone facing of the wharf beside the hoisting engine and the coal sheds, and was quickly made fast. By this time the potatoes were cooked. Helen ran up on deck to summon her stepfather. He was not in sight. She called him, and a coal heaver told the child that her stepfather had just gone across the "farm," as the

broad, paved water-front is called. Helen needed to be told no more. On the other side of the "farm" was Kelley's saloon. She went back into the cabin. Mrs. Hawkins looked up inquiringly.

"He's gone," said Helen simply.

The mother understood. "Let us eat," she said simply. She knew that fried potatoes could not compete with a free lunch.

All through the long evening that followed Mrs. Hawkins sat silent by the fire. From time to time a coughing spell racked her slender frame. Sometimes she wrung her hands. But save when she was spoken to, she sat in dumb misery, waiting, waiting.

A hush had come upon all of them. By a dim kerosene lamp Helen was skilfully mending some rents in a garment that was really past mending. Plainly it required an effort for her to keep her mind on what she was doing. From time to time she laid the garment down in her lap and sat staring straight ahead of her, unseeing.

Joe and Henry were on the floor playing with some jackstraws which Joe had made with his knife. The toys of the Wainright children were all home-made these days. Little Henry, hardly able to hobble with his deformed ankles, had gained a compensating skill with his hands and fingers. Baseball and other games that required activity he could not play. But with his

skilful fingers he could slide jackstraws out of the pile with a dexterity that even Joe, with all his cleverness, could hardly equal. Many were the hours these two brothers spent at this simple pastime. And always they enjoyed it, for it pleased Henry to feel that there was one thing he could do as well as his brother, while the keen struggle for mastery delighted Joe. To-night their game was subdued. The happy laughter that so often rang out during these games was heard but little. They played, but as though they, too, were waiting.

Slowly the hours dragged. Finally Helen gave up even the pretense of sewing and sat silent in her chair, also waiting. The jackstraws palled on the boys and were gathered up and put out of harm's reach. But the thin little mattresses in the corner were not unrolled, and the nodding little heads did not fall over in sleep. Something kept them awake. Joe and Henry talked a little about the happy days in Alabama. Helen said little, and the mother's eyes were misty. So through the long hours of a long night they waited.

And then that for which they waited came. The battered little clock on the wall struck one—the hour at which the law said that Mr. Kelley must cease taking from Charles Hawkins the money that the latter's family needed for food. And shortly after the clock struck, the heavy, uncertain tread of Mr. Hawkins was

heard, and then the captain of the *Mattie Ford* came stumbling into the little cabin. His wife rose to greet him, trembling. The children cowered aside, trying to squeeze into the corners out of the way. Mr. Hawkins glanced around the cabin and laughed. Evidently he was feeling good. He must have enjoyed himself at Kelley's. His heavy hand fell harshly on no little shoulders. He even spoke civilly, and as soberly as possible, to his wife. He sat down in a chair by the stove, but almost immediately the heat made him sleepy, and lurching into the bedroom, he fell across the bunk and in a minute more was in a drunken stupor.

After a little Mrs. Hawkins followed him into the bedroom. She took off his shoes. She raised his feet up on the bunk and tried to make him comfortable. Very softly she felt through his pockets. Then she came out to the light with a little roll of bills and some coins in her hands. Tremblingly she counted the money over. Of the fifty dollars, the wages that Mr. Hawkins had drawn at sunset, there was left to feed her family for the coming month just seventeen dollars and forty-three cents. Mrs. Hawkins dropped the money on the table and buried her face in her hands. Helen and Henry said nothing, but Joe came over to his mother and kissed her.

"Never mind, mother," he said. "I'm going away

and you won't have to feed me. And I am going to get a job and you won't have to go hungry any longer."

"Don't talk so, Joe," said Mrs. Hawkins. "You will break my heart."

After a time the thin little mattresses—pitifully thin they now appeared, too—were stretched out on the kitchen floor, and with a thin covering over them the three little Wainrights lay down to sleep. Then the mother blew out the light, stretched herself on the very edge of the bunk, and tried to sleep. And after a while worn-out nature yielded, and Mrs. Hawkins slumbered fitfully.

But she was awake again soon after daybreak. She got up to stir the fire, for the cabin had grown chilly. As she glanced toward the little mattresses on the floor she stood dumbfounded. For a moment her heart stopped beating. One of the little mattresses was empty. Joe and his brother were gone. She went to the cabin doorway and called, but she called in vain. She sat down in a chair by the fire and bowed her face in her hands.

CHAPTER II

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

HAD Mrs. Hawkins been a little earlier, she would have seen her two missing children climb painfully from the deck of the *Mattie Ford*, now resting deep down in the dock at low tide, up to the top of the wharf; for Joe and his brother had waited for the first streaks of daylight to make their escape. Joe had been so intent upon his plan of running away that he had slept but little. Just what he was going to do he did not know, except that he was going to leave the *Mattie Ford* forever. He had heard of other little boys who had run away from home and successfully made their way in the world. Joe was sure he could do as much. He was very young, and he was from Alabama. Of the hardships of a friendless lad in a great city he had much to learn.

He slept through the night, waking at intervals, and once or twice tiptoeing to the little cabin window to look for signs of day. When at last the hoisting engine and the coal shed began to stand out more distinctly, he knew that morning was at hand.

“Henry!” he said, tiptoeing back to his sleeping

brother and shaking him gently by the shoulder.
“Wake up!”

“What?” said Henry sleepily.

“Sh!” said Joe. “Wake up and be quiet. We are going on an adventure.”

Joe knew exactly how to appeal to his brother. All his life the little cripple had dreamed about adventures that he was never able to participate in. He had no idea what Joe was about to do. It was enough that he was asked to share in it. In a second he was wide awake. He understood the need of secrecy, and without question he arose and quietly picked up his shoes. He did not have to dress. The little sleepers on the *Mattie Ford* had need of all their clothes to keep them warm these chilly nights. Like a shadow Joe glided from the cabin, and Henry shuffled behind him as quietly as possible. They shut the door and tiptoed cautiously along the narrow strip of frosty deck at the side of the barge. When they reached the bow they put on their shoes.

Now arose a great difficulty. The *Mattie Ford* lay so low that even a grown man could hardly have reached the top of the wharf. For a moment it looked as though they would not be able to get ashore. Then Joe's eyes fell on the hawser that ran from the bow of the barge to the snubbing-post above. Joe swarmed up it like a monkey, regardless of the strip of open

water that yawned between barge and wharf. With the heedlessness of youth, he bade his crippled brother follow him. Henry looked at the yawning water and hesitated. But it was only for a moment. He was not to be cheated of his adventure. Hand over hand, lifting himself entirely by the strength of his arms and shoulders, the little cripple started up the rope. Joe twisted his feet around the noose at the snubbing-post, flattened himself on his belly, and reaching down over the edge of the wharf caught the collar of Henry's coat and helped him up. Then, glancing fearfully backward, they scurried around the protecting shoulder of the coal shed, and found themselves free.

"What are we goin' to do?" inquired Henry eagerly.

"Goin' away," said Joe.

"Goin' away!" repeated Henry perplexed. "I thought we were goin' on an adventure."

"Well, ain't that an adventure?" said Joe.

Henry looked disappointed. "I thought I'd have something to tell Helen when we got back," he said.

"We ain't a-goin' back," said Joe.

"We—ain't—a-goin'—back," repeated Henry bewildered. "Then where are we goin' and what are we goin' to do?"

"I dunno," said Joe. "But I am sick of being

locked up on that old coal barge, and I ain't never goin' back."

Henry's eyes opened wide. "Where are we goin' to sleep," he asked, "and get something to eat?"

"I dunno," replied Joe. "I guess that's where the adventure comes in."

Henry hesitated a little, but only for a little. Joe had so long looked out for him that he felt small misgiving of the success of this present venture. He was thoughtful for a time, and the two walked on in silence, Henry hobbling painfully along by the side of his brother.

The great city lay quiet before them, or as nearly quiet as it ever becomes. The roar of day was entirely gone, so that one could hear noises from a distance. At intervals an elevated railway train thundered along near-by Greenwich Street. An occasional surface-car disturbed the quiet. Far to the northward could be heard the rumble of heavy wagons as farmers drove their produce to the Gansevoort market, or belated four-horse milk vans passed. From the never-sleeping ferry-boats came the toot of whistles, now far, now near, as they signaled to each other in the dawning light. From time to time an early teamster started forth for his day's labor from some near-by stable, and went rattling and clattering away over the stone-paved road. Everywhere rose the sound of uneasy stir, not

loud enough to disturb, but distinct enough to be heard and almost felt. It was like the restless slumber of a giant. It was the city awakening. Through this low undertone of sound individual noises could be heard—the sharp clicking of heels on the pavements, the occasional bang of a door, and even voices here and there, as the city's earliest laborers took their way to work.

Those who passed hurried by with upturned collars and hands thrust deep in pockets, for the morning was sharp and frosty. The chill air penetrated to the bone. Joe and Henry, clad in the same garments they had worn in midsummer, hurried on in the wind seeking a place of shelter. Their teeth were all but a-chatter. As they passed along the water-front Joe looked on every side for the friendly face of some watchman or worker on the piers. But he saw no one he knew. The great doors to the pier sheds were closed. Not even the saloons were open. There was no place in which to get warm. They hurried on from pier to pier vainly seeking shelter first in one doorway and then in another. Finally they struck into a side street, where, protected from the wind by an angle of a building, they found comfort over a sidewalk grating through which rose the warm air from an engine room below.

Huddled there in the warmth, these tiny sons of liberty began to take account of stock. It was a short

enough process. Of what to do or where to go Joe had little idea ; and Henry had none. Despite his confinement on the *Mattie Ford* Joe had played along the water-front long enough to know his way about, and to have found some friends, as any lovable youngster will do, be he never so tattered and grimy. But to these friends Joe dared not turn for help. He was afraid they would inform Mr. Hawkins of his whereabouts. As to how he should earn money he was sorely puzzled. He could carry hand-bags or run errands ; but he knew that either job could be picked up only on occasion. He would have to find something that would yield a steady income. Joe had seen lads of his own age selling papers day after day at the same post, and he decided that he and Henry would become paper-boys. Poor Joe ! He had yet to learn that liberty even to sell newspapers is only for those who win it.

“Have you got any money ?” he asked his brother, though with no expectation of an answer in the affirmative. His face expressed his astonishment when Henry replied, “Yes,” and drew forth two copper cents. Joe took them and produced a long-hoarded penny of his own.

“For three cents we can buy five papers,” announced Joe—a fact he had learned from a friendly water-front newsy. “And when we sell them we can buy ——”

Joe scratched his head. "Well, we can buy some more."

"And how are we goin' to get our breakfast?" demanded Henry.

In the struggle to determine how many papers could be bought for a nickel, with the price at three cents for five, Joe had overlooked this important matter. But it needed only the word breakfast to tell him that he was very hungry. The cold air, the brisk morning walk, and the accumulated appetite of days made him yearn for food.

"We can get a 'hot dog' and a roll for two cents," said Henry, "and a cup of coffee for two cents more." Joe looked dubiously at the three coppers in his hand.

"How can we get the other cent, Henry?" he asked.

Just then he espied a man going down West Street with a big satchel. Joe ran up to him.

"Let me carry your bag, sir," he said. "Carry it for a cent, sir." The passer-by hardly looked at Joe.

"Please, sir," pleaded Joe. "I got three cents and I need another to get some breakfast."

"Get out!" growled the man, and Joe turned away downcast. He was beginning to learn the price of liberty. He trudged back to the friendly grating.

"Come on," he said. "We'll get the 'hot dog' anyway." And the two lads went slowly down West Street

toward a sidewalk restaurant, hardly larger than a dry-goods box, that bore on its dingy front the sign :

Frankfurter and roll	-	-	-	2c.
Coffee	-	-	-	2c.
Doughnut	-	-	-	1c.
Pie	-	-	-	3c.

Soon they reached the little food stall.

"Gimme a 'hot dog' sandwich," ordered Joe.

The aproned man in the box slit open a roll, fished a steaming frankfurter out of a kettle and laid it in the roll, then wiped a mustard stick along it, and handed the tidbit to Joe.

"Put on more mustard," said Joe. And turning to Henry while the condiment was being applied, he said : "It'll help keep us warm."

He laid down two pennies and took the sandwich. Then, huddling on the sheltered side of the stand, the two brothers divided the morsel and devoured it in silence. Joe stepped to the front of the stand again.

"Say, mister," he said, "I've only got one cent more. Will you give me a cent's worth of coffee?"

The stand keeper looked at him for a second. "Sure," he answered, reaching for a mug. But when he handed it to Joe it was filled to the brim.

"Thanks, mister," said Joe, and in the shelter of the stand the two lads sipped the grateful steaming liquid, draining the cup to the last drop.

Then the little wayfarers continued their journey down West Street. Not many blocks distant was the Pennsylvania Railroad ferry at Desbrosses Street. Joe hoped that he might be able to pick up a few pennies there.

By this time the city was wide awake. Wagons were rattling along, filling the street with their clatter, and people were passing on sidewalks in never-ending processions. The piers were humming with activity. With pleasure the Wainright boys saw the stir and bustle—the thousands of trucks bearing to and from the great steamships bulging loads of boxes, bales, bundles, and packages of curious shape, some coming from foreign countries, and curiously labeled, and others but just starting on their long journey across that mysterious ocean that they had so often glimpsed from the cabin of the *Mattie Ford*.

On the wide asphalted “farm,” they saw the piles and pyramids of articles of commerce, heaped up to await a more convenient time for carriage to their destination, or for transshipment to some other part of the world. Here were great bales of cotton, standing in long rows, with white patches showing through the dirty, iron-bound wrappers of burlap. Here were crates of oranges, heaped high and scenting all the water-front with their aroma. In places mysterious piles of merchandise were covered over with great

tarpaulins, and other heaps of goods stood under wooden awnings. The spaces between were filled with trucks, hopelessly tangled in places, their drivers swearing vigorously at one another. At other places wagons stood in orderly rows, backed up against the warehouses, the intelligent horses standing patient under their blankets. And at the principal pier sheds brawny policemen kept the teamsters in order and the traffic moving.

The ferry was destined to prove an unprofitable field of endeavor. What with the development of tunnels and the consequent shifting of traffic, the Desbrosses Street ferry now carried few besides commuters. There were no women travelers, who, Joe knew with the unerring instinct of childhood, would have listened to his plea and given him their luggage to carry. And what carrying of baggage there was to be had was gobbled up by older and bigger boys. In vain Joe tried to get a bag to carry, while Henry huddled shivering by the ferry-house. Finally a burly policeman, fearful for the little cripple, rather gruffly bade the boys move on. Then and there Joe began to hate "the cops."

The lads drifted over toward Broadway. A pedestrian ahead of them shot two newspapers into one of the "robin redbreast" cans of the street cleaning department on a corner. Joe saw hope afresh. He ran

to the can and fished out the papers. They were unsoiled and looked almost as fresh as new copies. He smoothed them out and went on to a busy corner. Apparently it was a good stand. On the opposite walk a big boy with a whole armful of papers was busy selling to pedestrians. Joe began to call out his wares.

"*Sun*, mister? *Times*?" he shrilled as he glided about among the passers-by. Hardly had he started when the newsy on the other curb came across the street.

"Whatcha mean by sellin' papes here?" he demanded irately. "Dis is my corner."

"Your corner?" queried Joe in astonishment.

"Yep, my corner. I been sellin' here for a year. See? Now beat it."

Joe did not see. He did not know that a city newsy wins and keeps his point of vantage by preëmption and the force of arms. But he did "beat it." The other newsy towered a full head above him, and there was nothing to do but move on again.

"Never mind, Henry," said Joe, as he saw the tears gathering in the eyes of his brother, though he had to fight manfully to keep his own eyes dry. "We'll have better luck next time."

They went up the street to another corner, and seeing no rival, Joe once more began to call his papers.

"Give me a *Sun*," said a pedestrian. Joe gleefully

handed out his one copy. The man glanced at the paper and tossed it back. "I read that hours ago," he said. "Haven't you an evening paper?"

Joe was learning about the paper business, but the process was painful. By this time the morning was well past. Fortunately the sun was warm and the little adventurers suffered no longer from cold. At noon they drifted back, unconsciously, toward Barrow Street. But when they came in sight of the coal shed fear stopped them. They knew what Mr. Hawkins had done to them for no reason at all. What he would do now with such provocation they could only imagine. So they sought out a sheltered spot against a pier shed and sat down in the grateful sunshine.

Near by a boy but little larger than Joe also seated himself. He opened a paper bag, took out a fat sandwich, and began to eat it. The two wanderers watched him intently. The stranger first glanced at them casually, then turned and gave the cripple a searching examination.

"Want a hunk?" he said presently, and breaking his sandwich in two he gave them each a piece. They fairly bolted the food.

"Youse must be hungry," he commented.

"We are," said Henry.

"Didn't youse have no breakfast?" asked the stranger.

"A 'hot dog' sandwich," replied Joe.

"What's the matter? Busted?"

"Yes," said Joe.

"Den youse is up against it. Here, take dis," and he fished up another sandwich out of the bag. "Got any place to sleep?" he inquired of a sudden.

"No," replied Joe.

"Den I'll tell you where to go. I slept dere myself once. I'm livin' at home now." And he directed them to a certain pier that was warm—at least it wasn't freezing cold—where a big-hearted watchman would let them in. "Tell him you ain't got no home," concluded the stranger. He stopped and looked the two lads over closely for a minute. "Ain't you got no home?" he asked.

"We used to live on a canal-boat," rejoined Joe, "but our father—he ain't our right father, you know—beat us, and we run away."

"Ain't you got no job?"

"No," said Joe.

"An' ain't you never lived in Noo York?"

"No," replied Joe.

"Dat's bad." Again the stranger looked Henry over. "Dem bum pins ought to be good for a hand-out," he said.

"We couldn't beg," said Joe, fathoming his meaning.

"Who wants you to beg?" retorted the boy. "Sell

somethin'." He rose to go. "Here's a jitney," he said, and tossed Joe a nickel.

The sandwich had served only to sharpen their appetites, and the nickel was soon converted into three penny sandwiches and a cup of coffee.

The afternoon brought a little progress. Henry was so tired out by his unwonted exertions that his weak little ankles, the result of infantile paralysis, could scarce carry him further. Joe found him a warm corner in an angle of a pier shed, where the wind was shut off and the sun beat down, and left him there to watch the busy scenes of the water-front, while he himself went off alone to pursue the adventure of finding bread and shelter.

Henry, snug in his warm corner, was in no danger from the surging traffic. He could look on without fear. It was pleasant to see the endless stream of wagons and people, to watch the teamsters skilfully guiding their horses, and the big policeman, like a Jupiter in brass and blue, directing everything. As far as the eye could see the water-front seethed with activity. It was like the restless, never-ceasing surge of the ocean. And the babel of blending sounds that rose upward, punctuated now and then with acute single noises, like the shouting of a teamster, or the shriek of a whistle, was like the roaring of the surf, accented now and then by the breaking of a single wave-crest.

The incessant motion tired the eye, and the very noise itself induced drowsiness. Henry, who was both tired and sleepy, soon yielded to the influence and went fast asleep.

And in this condition he was like to have tumbled from his snug perch and fallen into danger, had not Sullivan, the big policeman, come over and wakened him. He had had his eye on the lad for some time. Like all policemen he was wise in the ways of the world.

"What did you run away from home for?" he demanded severely, after he had shaken the little cripple by the shoulder.

Henry was too terrified to answer at once. He knew that a policeman had once arrested Mr. Hawkins and given him a black eye, and he had seen policemen chasing small boys on the piers. He thought he was about to be arrested himself. But neither he nor Joe had learned as yet, even when in distress, to lie. And so after an interval he said, "Our father beat us and kept us locked up. He was our second father. Our right father is dead."

"And who is 'us'?" demanded the policeman.

"Why, Joe and me. Joe's my brother."

"Where is he now?"

"Tryin' to get a job," said Henry.

"Humph," grunted the policeman. "I suppose I'll have to send you to ——"

"Oh! please, mister policeman," pleaded Henry, "don't lock me up. I ain't done nothin'. Honest, I ain't. An' Joe'll take care of me."

"Likely," grumbled the bluecoat, frowning. Then of a sudden he asked, "Where is your home?"

"On the *Mattie Ford*."

"What? The coal barge?"

"Yes, sir."

"And is your stepfather Hawkins?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hell!" said the policeman. "Well, you stay awake now and tell me when your brother comes back." The guardian of the law returned to his post. On the way he muttered to himself, "Poor little devils! I'll have to look after them."

Meantime Joe had fared forth, still strong in hope. Up West Street he went, asking in shop after shop for work. He found none. He offered to carry the bags of several pedestrians, but his proffers were rejected. He kept on and on until he found himself at the ferry at Twenty-third Street. Here a friendly newsy gave him some pointers about life in New York.

"It's a tough game," said this young philosopher, "but youse never wants to chuck up the sponge. Somethin' always turns up when youse don't expect it."

And true to his prophecy, something did turn up:

for Joe managed to get two bags to carry for two women travelers, and each one gave him ten cents. With this wealth burning in his pocket, he started back to find Henry. But it was a long, long walk. Tired out from his hard day, he had to fight himself all the way to keep from spending a nickel to ride in a street-car. But finally he got back and found Henry. He displayed his two dimes proudly.

"Now we'll have a feast," he said. "Come on."

Already it was beginning to grow cold again. The little brothers started away. "I told the cop I'd tell him when you got back," said Henry.

"Forget it!" replied Joe, already beginning to lapse into the language of the streets. "A guy told me to look out for the cops. They chases little boys. We don't want to get pinched. Come on." And while the watchful Sullivan was subduing a recalcitrant truck driver, the little adventurers slipped away.

As they neared the coal dock, Henry said, "I wonder how the *Mattie Ford* looks this afternoon?"

"I dunno," replied Joe. "We better keep away from there." But he went right on toward the coal shed.

"I suppose," said Henry, "it's nice and warm in the cabin."

"I suppose so," assented Joe.

"I wonder what mother's goin' to have for supper?" said Henry. "She's got some money now."

"I wonder," echoed Joe.

By this time they had reached the very edge of the coal shed. Another step would expose them to view from the barge. They paused.

"We'd better go away," said Joe faintly.

"Let's take one look," said Henry.

"All right," said Joe. "And then we'll go." They peeped around the corner of the shed. All was quiet aboard.

"I wonder," said Henry, "how the cabin looks."

"I dunno," said Joe, though he knew every line in it.

"Let's take a peep," said Henry.

"All right," said Joe. "Just one and then we'll go."

They slipped around the shed and aboard the barge, now riding high and almost empty. They tiptoed along the narrow deck and peeped into Mr. Hawkins' bedroom. The dragon was not there. They peered through the kitchen window. Only their mother was at home. She was sitting by the fire, her face buried in her hands.

In an instant the two youngsters were beside her, Henry with his face in her lap, and Joe with his arms around her neck. She folded them both to her heart, and all three began to cry.

"Thank God!" was all that Mrs. Hawkins could

say. But after a while her tears ceased. "Why did you run away?" she asked.

"You know why we run away. We was tired of bein' locked up like dogs," said Joe. His indignation was beginning to rise again. "An' I'm goin' to get a job and take you away, too. He don't treat you right either."

"Hush, Joe."

"Well, it's true," rejoined Joe. He looked around the cabin. Then he opened a cupboard. "Why ain't you gettin' supper?" he asked suspiciously. Mrs. Hawkins made an evasive reply. "I knowed it," said Joe. "He's took all your money. I wish I was a man, I'd ——"

"Hush, Joe," said his mother.

"Here's twenty cents," said Joe, handing out the precious dimes. "Get some supper, mother." Mrs. Hawkins began to cry.

"Keep them yourself, Joe," she said, pressing them back into his hand. "And here's a quarter to go with them." She did not tell him that it was her last penny—all that she had been able to conceal from her lord and master when that individual demanded his "roll" before starting out again for Kelley's saloon.

"What did he say about us?" demanded Joe angrily.

The mother was silent. Mr. Hawkins, when he found that the boys had run away, had cursed them

fiercely. But the punishments he threatened were not because they had gone away. They were in case they should come back. Now that he was legitimately rid of them, he intended to stay rid of them. Mrs. Hawkins knew that in his present ugly mood her husband would live up to his threats. Silently she fought the battle of mother love. She could not bear to think of her babes adrift in the world. She could bear less to think of them in the power of her drunken husband. Finally she said, "I am afraid for you if he comes home and finds you here." She remembered that it was almost time for supper. He might come home for his meal. He probably would if his money was all gone.

"Joe," she said, "is there any place where you can sleep?"

"Sure," he replied. "I got a place already—a nice, warm place. And a fellow told me where I can get a job to-morrow, and ——"

A heavy footfall was heard on the deck. They all started. But it was not Mr. Hawkins. It was only a coal heaver come aboard to look for a missing shovel.

"You must go," said the frightened mother, pushing her boys gently toward the cabin door. They started away. "Joe, Joe," she called after them. "Whenever you are hungry, come back and I will give you some money. I'll get it for you somewhere, somehow."

The two lads climbed ashore, while the mother crumpled up in her chair by the fire, in dry-eyed grief. Her heart was dying within her. Joe pulled himself together. The visit to the *Mattie Ford* had well-nigh broken down all his brave resolution. At eleven our moral fibre is not strong. He led the way to a cheap eating place, helping his crippled brother over the uneven way.

Then the two went slowly to the pier where the strange boy had told them they could find shelter. A big watchman stood by the door.

"Can we sleep here?" inquired Joe timidly.

"No," replied the watchman. "Do you think this is a hotel?"

"Please, mister," pleaded Joe. "We're cold and tired, and we ain't got no home."

"It's against orders," said the watchman.

"A fellow told us that you was good to little boys and would let us in," said Joe.

"He did, eh?" replied the watchman with a show of fierceness. "Well, if any little boys ever slept on this pier they must have got in when my back was turned."

And then for such a conscientious watchman he did a strange thing. He walked half-way across the "farm" to speak to an acquaintance, leaving the door to the pier shed wide open. Joe and Henry looked at

him in perplexity for a moment, then slipped inside the shed. There they found a banana wagon with soft straw in the bottom, and two warm, thick blankets in the driver's seat. Joe and Henry were making themselves snug and comfortable when the watchman returned, locked the door, and retreated into his little box of an office. He heard the whispering and the stirring in the banana wagon. "Must be rats!" he muttered. But no rats ever made sounds like those.

CHAPTER III

LIFE ON THE STREETS

IT must have been very early, for inside of the great pier shed it was still dark, when the night watchman came out of his cubby-hole. He carried a big teapot, which he filled with water at a faucet. Back in his office again, he lighted a small gas stove and set the water to heat. If he intended all that tea for himself, he must have been a terrible toper. Then he came out of his box again and went straight over to the banana wagon, though why he should have done so Goodness only knows. And here, apparently to his intense astonishment, he found the two little seekers after liberty fast asleep in each other's arms like the babes in the wood, and snug and warm in the great blankets.

“What are you doing here?” he demanded sharply, waking them from the most comfortable night's slumber they had had in many a week. The boys sat up blinking and startled. “Didn't I tell you it was against the rules for me to let anybody on this pier?”

The watchman was about to say something further, but Henry, frightened at his fierce look, began to cry.

Thereupon the watchman turned his back. The little offenders slipped out of the truck and made a rush for the door.

"Come back here," cried the watchman sternly. "Are you going to let me give you a nice warm bunk and then go away without making up your bed? What'll I tell the truck driver when he sees them blankets all mussed up?"

Joe climbed back on the truck, folded and replaced the blankets, and then stirred up the hay so as to leave no trace of the telltale depression where they had slept.

"Come here," said the watchman when the bed making was complete, and he led the way into his watch-box. The lads obeyed a-tremble. It was warm and cozy. There was only one chair, so the boys stood up. The watchman, seated in the chair, could peer straight into their faces. Now that Joe had a good look at the man he thought he seemed fiercer than ever with his great beak of a nose, his shaggy eyebrows, and his stern expression. He questioned the boys at length, and Joe, seeing no need for concealment, told him the truth, even down to the fact that their total funds in hand amounted only to fifteen cents.

"Well, as long as I'm going to eat you might as well join me," said the man presently, "even if you did come here against the rules."

He unlocked a little cupboard. On the shelves were

many bananas, some still green, some ripe. There was a package, which he took out and opened. It contained a generous lunch. He gave the boys a sandwich and a hard-boiled egg apiece, and later made them divide between them a great slab of pie. There was tea enough for them all and to spare. When the three had finished eating, the watchman took several bananas from his cupboard. The pier of which he was the nocturnal guardian was used for unloading fruit. He had gathered up some of the green bananas as they fell from the bunches in unloading, and was ripening them in his cupboard.

"Put these in your pockets," he said. "I get 'em when the ship's unloading. It's a good place to be when you're hungry," and he gave Joe a very peculiar look. Then he said, "Now get out of here. And don't ever let me catch you coming on this dock."

By this time the city was beginning to stir. Joe and Henry made straight for the Twenty-third Street ferry. There Joe had had his only luck of the day before, and there he was going to try fortune again. His attempt at selling newspapers had been so unsuccessful that he thought he would try something else. The advice of the street urchin to "sell something" Joe turned over in his mind. He was going to get some pencils. He had often seen boys selling pencils. Between selling pencils and carrying baggage he thought

he could get along—and as for Henry, perhaps he, too, might sell an occasional pencil or a paper, though Joe looked for very little assistance from his deformed brother. He was too inexperienced in the ways of the world to know that in some respects his brother's chance just now was better than his own. When they arrived at the plaza in front of the ferry-houses, Henry sat down on a bench, while Joe hurried away to get the pencils.

Joe was gone a long time, for not knowing where to get pencils cheaply elsewhere, he hunted up a five-and-ten-cent store. Meanwhile Henry sat on the bench. It wasn't so very cold, and in watching the people pass he forgot about himself. After a time he thought he would smooth his hair. He laid his cap on his knee and was stroking his tousled head when he felt something drop in his cap. He looked. It was a five-cent piece. A number of people were passing close to him, but none of them seemed to have lost the coin. Henry was about to call out for an owner when the thought came to him that perhaps it had been dropped purposely. His pale face went scarlet. They took him for a beggar.

He recalled what the boy who gave them a sandwich had said about his "bum pins" and a "hand-out." He had understood that to mean that if he chose to beg, his deformity would likely help him, but he had never

dreamed that people would press charity upon him. All his life he had suffered because of his deformity. But never had he felt such humiliation as this. People took him for a beggar. They would always take him for a beggar, because he was deformed for life. He hated himself and his shrunken limbs as he had never hated before. He wished he could be strong and active and independent like Joe. Then he could take care of himself. And in the poignancy of his grief he almost hated Joe. He wanted to run away, to crawl out of sight and hide himself. He slid off the bench. Then he remembered that he must wait for Joe. He couldn't go away. He wriggled back into his seat again and began to cry. Then the thought came to him that people would not understand his grief and would perhaps give him more charity. He checked his tears and sat there in silent misery, shamefaced, looking down. But his cap was tight on his head.

Then at last came Joe. Never before had Henry concealed anything from Joe. But he had been hurt so deeply that he could not bring himself to tell anybody. And besides he had wronged Joe in feeling bitter toward him, even if it were only for an instant—good old Joe, who had always helped him and taken care of him. So he was silent.

But Joe noticed the pitiful look on Henry's face. "Never mind, Henry," he said confidently, "we're all

right now. We won't have to go hungry no more. I've got some pencils to sell." He drew forth eighteen pencils that he had gotten for his fifteen cents. He gave Henry six and kept twelve himself. "We'll sell them for three cents apiece," said Joe. "You stay here, and I'll go down to the ferry-house."

Joe approached the great ferry buildings and took a post on the outer walk. When a boat came in he ran to meet the crowd, calling his wares and picking out the individuals that he thought would be most likely to buy from him. The pencils went slowly. In fact they hardly went at all. But, though he knew it not, the training was of value to Joe. He was studying psychology and physiognomy in the best university in the world. Between the times of boat arrivals he pressed his wares on stray travelers, or talked with the friendly newsy with whom he had conversed the day before. From him Joe learned many things.

"Fer fifteen cents," said the newsy, "ye can go to de Lurie. Dey gives you a bed and yer grub. It's over in Thoity-fourth Street."

"What's the Lurie?" asked Joe.

"A lodgin'-house for boys," replied the newsy. He described the glories of the place. "You gets a bed all to yerself, wid clean sheets," he said. "An' it's warm, and de grub's good."

To Joe this sounded much like a description of

Heaven. "We're goin' there," he announced. "An' what did you say they had to eat?" And Joe made the newsy recite in detail the story of how they were fed at the Lurie.

For a while Joe's spirits remained high, as he thought of the comforts in store for them at the Lurie. But as hour after hour passed and nobody would buy his pencils, he began to feel disheartened. From time to time he looked over at Henry on his bench. The little cripple sat there as patient as a statue. Joe had intended to go over and tell him of the good news about the Lurie. Now he was afraid to do so, lest he raise hopes only to have them dashed to pieces again. So he remained at his post. But at one of his glances toward Henry, he saw his brother waving his arms frantically at him. He ran over to the bench.

"Give me some more pencils," said Henry. "I've sold all of mine."

"You!" ejaculated Joe in astonishment. And then as he saw the hurt look in Henry's face, he added, "Good for you, Henry. You're a better salesman than me."

Henry smiled faintly. But the smile covered a hurt. He knew it was his deformed feet that sold the pencils, not he. For twice purchasers had pressed a nickel on him in payment. Each time he had refused to accept more than the price of the pencil, and for

many weeks to come the little cripple would have none of anything that looked to him like charity.

Joe gave his brother six more pencils, and went back to his post. After a time he got a bag to carry and that netted him five cents. He sold one more pencil, making three in all that he had disposed of. By this time the noon whistles were blowing and Joe was ravenous. He went to his brother and they counted up. Joe had fourteen cents and Henry twenty-seven. He had sold nine pencils. The nickel that had come to him as a gift was hidden in a pocket. He made no mention of it to Joe.

“You got almost twice as much as me,” said Joe, showing astonishment and no little admiration. And the way in which he said it thrilled the little cripple with real happiness; for Joe’s statement showed that Henry had risen in Joe’s estimation to a parity with himself.

Of the total capital of forty-one cents now in hand, only twenty-nine cents was profit. Both boys understood that they must not lessen their original capital, and twelve cents were put aside for reinvestment. Even so, they felt wealthy. Twenty-nine cents to spend! If they could make that sum in the morning, they could doubtless do as well in the afternoon. And if they did, they could go to the Lurie. Forthwith Joe communicated to Henry the story of that delectable

place, while with shining eyes the two trudged off to an eating place to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Somehow things did not go right after dinner. Perhaps it was because of the perversity of inanimate things that some one has complained of. Perhaps it was because the crowds coming to the city in the afternoon were different from the morning masses. Whatever it was, it almost spelled disaster for these latest recruits in the army of those who toil. Joe lugged a sample case, so heavy that it nigh tore his little arms from their sockets, three long blocks to the elevated railway station for a sharp-faced Jew, who beat him down to three cents in payment. Henry sold two pencils. Then, when the day was growing old, Joe in desperation invested six cents in ten evening newspapers. He saw that everybody was carrying or buying newspapers. But all the good stands were pre-empted, so Joe had to go off to an inconspicuous corner, and there after more than an hour of effort, he disposed of eight of his papers. He could have sold more, but people did not want the ones he had for sale. So, sadly, he learned another lesson in psychology. Fortunately his papers were of the final editions, and he sold the remaining two to another newsy for one cent. His venture had netted him three cents. He went back to Henry. Between them they had cleared ten cents. There still remained four pencils.

The vision of the Lurie went a-glimmering. More than ever they saw that at all costs they must keep their capital. They must dine that night on ten cents. Fortunately each boy had saved a banana. At a frankfurter stand near by they had each a "hot dog" sandwich, a cup of coffee, and a penny square of cheap chocolate candy. Then, munching their bananas, they trudged away to hold counsel together as to where they should sleep. A few weeks later this would have given them small concern. Like rats and stray dogs, they soon learned where the snug holes were to be found. But as yet they were woefully ignorant. A night's lodging still meant to these little wayfarers a bed and covers—and they knew not where to get either.

They discussed the watchman of the pier where they had slept the night before. The street urchin had told them he was big-hearted, but he had talked very sternly to them. To be sure he had given them some breakfast, but, as he had remarked at the time, that was only because he was going to eat himself. Joe was for going back and taking another chance. Henry felt frightened at the remembrance of that fierce visage.

"Maybe we can sneak in again," suggested Joe. "And if we get in when he don't know it, he won't hurt us. He didn't do anything to us this morning."

And not knowing what else to do, the tired lads

went down the water-front, once more hushed, and now illuminated with big arc lights. They approached the forbidden pier with great circumspection. As they drew near, they saw a very strange thing. The watchman, instead of resting in his comfortable chair in his office, was pacing up and down in the chilly night in front of his door, and from time to time he stopped and looked intently up the long water-front. Of a sudden he espied them—at least Joe at first thought so, but he must have been mistaken, for the watchman instantly turned and paced the other way, lengthening his beat, and neglecting his open door shamefully. When he turned about Joe and his brother had vanished. Apparently the watchman had had about enough exercise, for very soon he went back to his pier, locked the great door, and retired to his den. And if he heard any rats this time he said nothing.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAW IN THE CASE

SO began a long period of hardship and privation. Newspapers and pencils proved to be the mainstay in the matter of earning a living, or rather of eking out an existence. To be sure the two boys tried selling shoe-strings and other odds and ends of sidewalk traffic, but with small success. The little capital risked in these ventures remained tied up for a long time, though the experience gained by the ventures came quick enough. Nor did it take them long to discover that unsold papers could be exchanged for later issues, thus precluding loss of capital. So they drifted into the great army of newsboys. And this was perhaps fortunate. For one thing it helped to keep them out of mischief. For another thing it developed them marvelously. It made them good judges of human nature. It quickened and sharpened their wits. They became shrewd, aggressive, confident. They gained initiative and courage. In no time at all they looked back with scorn at the weak showing they had made in the first days of their strike for freedom.

Between times Joe ran errands, carried baggage, did odd jobs ; for though the sale of papers kept them alive, the income therefrom was anything but regal. A successful day's trade seldom netted more than thirty cents to each of them. More often they made twenty cents. Not infrequently they subsisted on fifteen cents each.

Always Joe sought for a "reg'lar job," as he put it ; but always he met with the reply that he was too young. This ever angered Joe. Despite poor food and none too much of it, he was growing fast and becoming both tough and strong. For a long time no one took the trouble to inform him that the law forbade the employment of children of his age, until one day his wrath exploded against the man who had roused it by refusal of a job.

"I cannot hire you on account of the law," said that individual after Joe had expostulated angrily. "The law will not allow me to hire you until you are fourteen years old."

"But I'm big enough and strong enough to do any job in your shop," maintained Joe aggressively.

"Perhaps you are," said the man, "but you haven't had enough schooling."

"What's that got to do with it," angrily retorted Joe, "if I can do the work?"

"The law says that you cannot be employed until

you are fourteen years old and have reached a certain grade in school," returned the man.

Joe turned away disheartened. In his limited knowledge law and the police were inextricably confused. He understood somehow that the law was gotten up by some one for unwarrantable interference with personal liberty and that "de cops" were the means of making this interference effective. Already they had chased him more than once, causing him the loss of many a penny's worth of traffic. But here was an injustice beyond his worst dreams. Even if he could find a job, the law would not allow him to take it. What was worse, two years and more must elapse before he would be old enough. To a youngster of Joe's age it might as well have been a century. And then, when he was old enough, he couldn't get a job unless he had been to school a good deal longer, Joe rightly suspected, than he had been. Now that he had something definite to go on, Joe hated the law almost as much as he hated "de cops."

Poor Joe! He did not understand that the very law he had come to hate was meant for his own protection from things that he was still too young to understand, worldly-wise though he was becoming. Still less did he dream that that same distasteful law was to be the means of helping him gain the things he most desired.

But though he could get no permanent employment,

he often picked up temporary jobs. Sometimes he removed the wrappings from newly received furniture in a great furnishing house. At times he was employed to separate pieces of wood from the paper wrappings in the same establishment. Often he carried bundles or ran errands. He had his eyes open for every possible bit of work. Once he got a job at bailing the water from a flooded elevator-shaft after a big storm. For that he got a quarter, which was the most money he had ever received for any job; and though his little back was nigh broken in half by the labor, he returned to Henry in high glee. It was a red-letter day for the lads. Henry had netted twenty-nine cents from the sale of papers, and Joe had earned thirty cents in addition to his quarter.

They hastened to a cheap restaurant. With such riches they could have their fill. Each had an order of ham and beans, with coffee. Then followed pie—lemon pie for Joe and apple pie for Henry. They ate four doughnuts each. Orders of ice-cream followed. Then they ate cocoanut cake, with a bottle of lemon soda between them. Apple dumplings came next. And then, because they had only seven cents left, they bought each a frankfurter sandwich with plenty of mustard, and spent the remaining three cents at a sidewalk stand for molasses candy and peanuts. It was a big night for them.

This time the brothers had chosen food in preference to a bed. At the Lurie they could have had both for less than the cost of this meal alone, but the fare at the Lurie, though wholesome and substantial, was plain and the menu limited. Already the unadorned bill of fare, that had once sounded so good as to need repetition, had palled on them. Like the rest of us, they must needs have their fling, even if, like Franklin with his whistle, they paid dear for it.

But going without a bed was no longer a hardship to these little urchins. As the weeks had passed they had learned well how to care for themselves. They knew every warm grating, every protected cellar way and area way, and every other place of possible refuge within a considerable radius of the ferry where they plied their callings.

For many a night after they ran away from the *Mattie Ford* they had slept in the fruit pier near the coal shed. Very quickly they saw through the watchman's pretended fierceness. Yet he kept up the pretense to the end, rating them roundly every morning that he found them asleep in one of his wagons—and as often sharing his breakfast with them. To-night, made wakeful by the gastronomic struggles doubtless going on within them, they chose to make the long journey down to the fruit pier. There they were always sure of a comfortable nest. It was well that they

did. On the water-front they encountered the watchman. He told them that their stepfather, during a spell of drunkenness that afternoon, had fallen and cut his head, and had had his wound stitched up by an ambulance surgeon.

"I was just comin' on duty," said the watchman, "and I noticed the crowd about the ambulance. Seein' it was backed up against the *Mattie Ford*, I pushed through the crowd, thinkin' your mother might be worse. It was only Hawkins, but when the doc come out I says to him, 'Doc,' says I, 'can't nothin' be done for the woman in there? She's got the con.'

"'Sure,' he says. 'I looked at her when I was inside. She looks to me as though she might get better if only she had the right kind of food.'

"'An' what's that?' I says.

"'Why, milk and eggs, and other nourishin' things,' he says."

Joe was very serious when he slipped inside the pier shed and sought out a comfortable truck for slumber. Long after Henry was asleep, Joe lay staring into the darkness above him, thinking about what the watchman had told him. Concerning consumption Joe had somehow become a fatalist. Like many others of his class, he supposed that there was no escape from death once one had contracted tuberculosis. Death might come sooner or later, but come it would. He had seen

his father sicken and die. Then his mother began to decline, and whenever Joe had thought of the matter at all, which had been seldom, it was merely to wonder how long his mother would live. That she might recover was a new thought to him.

No sooner had his little mind grasped that fact, however, than he bent all his mental energy to a solution of the problem of how to bring this recovery about. Milk and eggs! How could he get them? Joe turned the matter over and over in his mind. The experience of weeks had shown him that the meagre profits from the sale of newspapers would not bring the needed relief. A steady job was the only solution that Joe could see. And when he came to this conclusion he cried out angrily against the law that forbade his working, and he cursed the unknown authors of that law. And staring despairingly at the darkness about him, like a fugitive looking at the wall of a blind alley, the troubled child at last found forgetfulness in sleep.

He wanted to go aboard the *Mattie Ford* next morning, but dared not do so on account of his stepfather. He resolved to pay a visit at the first opportunity, however, and so resolving, shuffled away to work in a very bitter mood. He began to think of society as an enemy, to believe that the law, the police, and the populace generally were somehow hostile to him.

As the weeks went by that feeling grew. Try as he would, he could do no better than wring a bare existence from the society he was beginning to hate. Yet it was only at times that his mind took a misanthropic tinge. He grew bigger, sturdier, hardier, more independent. For the most part he was still the laughing, care-free, mischievous lad he had always been, delighting in pranks and adventures. And many was the tight hole he got out of only by virtue of a ready tongue or nimble legs.

His appearance was truly pitiful. His face and hands were dark with grime. His hair was long and unkempt. With the approach of winter he had acquired from somewhere an old suit of gray clothes that had been made for a rather stout man. These Joe wore outside of his other garments. He kept the trousers from falling off with a strap that had once been a part of a harness, and rolled the bottoms up until his feet protruded. The coat came to his knees, and the sleeves he shortened by rolling up the cuffs. His own shoes, long since worn to rags, had been discarded for a pair once worn by a full-grown man. Joe's feet slid around inside of them, and they flopped about when he walked, giving him a clumsy, clownish appearance.

Perhaps it was this appearance of pitifulness that helped Joe, or perhaps it was his growing ability to

read people, that made him more successful as time went on. Both he and Henry now earned more money. Henry hoarded his surplus for a long time and finally bought himself some crutches. They were as effective as a stage property. The kindly disposed no longer needed to be pled with to make them purchasers. They bought his pencils and papers, and not infrequently paid him double the price asked. His original reluctance to take gratuities slowly disappeared. All about him the lad saw men acquiring things in questionable ways—policemen grafting on fruit merchant or peanut vender, cabbies extorting undue prices, baggage-men and public employees selling as favors what they should have rendered as public service. Why should not he take what came his way? As the moral fibre of the lads slowly broke down, they did without hesitation what at first they would have refused to do. Henry not merely accepted gratuities. At times he actually begged for them. Thus slowly but surely, the protective coating of native moral strength was corroded by the strong acid of evil influence. By almost imperceptible degrees Henry had come from the point where the mere thought of being considered a beggar was torture to the situation of actually being a beggar. And Joe now did readily many things that in his first days on the streets he would have scorned to do. He ran questionable er-

rands, occasionally hooked an apple from a stand, and was glad of a chance to share in the petty graft of cabman or clerk.

With the increased income thus secured, the two boys were often in comparative affluence. On a very good day Henry sometimes netted as much as a dollar. Joe could make fifty cents when things went right. And this was well. It gave them better food, which their little bodies much needed at this period of growth. Their success also had its dangers. They began to attend theatres and go to moving-picture shows. And as these entertainments were necessarily of the cheapest and worst character, the effect was bad. They saw much of the evils of night life and little of the good side of society. Inevitably they began to go with a gang. The child is father to the man, and man is a social animal. Living wholly on their own resources, it was inevitable that they should seek out companions. These necessarily were of their street acquaintances. Mostly they were young boys, but little older than themselves. Their instincts were mischievous rather than criminal. Could some one have turned their activities into safe channels, they would have come through to manhood safely enough. But there was no one to guide them aright. The little forays that began in an effort to plague some disliked watchman grew in time into raids for the purpose of theft.

Although Joe was friendly with the gang, and indeed was unconsciously a member of it, he strangely enough refused to gamble. He tried craps and lost. That settled it. He had too urgent a need for his funds to risk them. The thing that held him back, the slender thread that kept him fast to lawfulness, was mother love. Weak though Mrs. Hawkins was, she loved her children with a true and noble affection. In the matter of righteousness her own life had been exemplary. The one act for which she could blame herself was the fact that in a moment of weakness, when life was going ill with her and her brood, she had married Hawkins. It appeared to be an easy way out of a difficult place. But she had paid dearly for her weakness. Ever had she striven to keep her children in the paths of rectitude. And though her preachments had accomplished little, her mother love had done much. Whenever Joe came to see his mother, as he had come occasionally ever since he ran away, he went back to his tasks a better boy. And now that he was trying to effect her recovery he saw her more often. To buy their mother milk and eggs the brothers hoarded their extra pennies. This in itself went a long way to keep them from evil shows and harmful moving-picture places. Perhaps it drove them to the gang for recreation, but here again love for mother proved an antidote. At every visit Joe's mother talked over with

him the affairs of his life. She listened to his story of struggle and effort. Little could she guide him, but this appeal she never failed to make.

"You must be a good boy, Joe," she always said, "for when I get well and strong again, and you are grown up so I can live with you, I want to have a boy I can be proud of."

For Mrs. Hawkins had begun to take hope. The milk and eggs, and the other nourishing food she bought with the small sums Joe brought her, had begun to have an effect. She felt better, was obviously stronger, and had begun really to hope that picture painted by Joe, of a reunited family and a home of their own, when Joe should be old enough to get a "reg'lar job," might in time be something besides a vision.

And so the weeks passed. Every time the brothers could accumulate enough extra money to buy a supply of eggs and milk—and after all it was pitifully infrequent—Joe went down to the coal dock and slipped aboard the *Mattie Ford*. For days thereafter he avoided the gang, hustling for pennies every minute of the day, and hoarding his coppers with fierce jealousy.

CHAPTER V

A MISHAP AND WHAT CAME OF IT

ABOUT the time that the watchman of the banana pier told Joe of the milk and egg remedy, another event occurred that played a part in the destiny of the dwellers on the *Mattie Ford*. This time Helen was the instrument of their betterment. Now well past her fifteenth birthday she had grown into a large girl. Physically, indeed, she had attained nearly her full development. She was tall, sturdy, and well rounded. Always pretty as a child, she had become a young woman of genuine beauty. Her features were regular and good. Her red cheeks emphasized the blueness of her eyes, and her abundant hair of brownish gold framed her face bewitchingly.

But the distinguishing mark about this child, the thing that gave her real beauty rather than mere prettiness, was her expression. The responsibilities that had fallen upon her shoulders since the death of her father—the oversight of her brothers, the care of her sickly mother, the task of feeding hungry mouths from a larder too often bare—all these things had left their imprint on her face. Sweetness and strength were

both to be read in the half sad, half smiling little countenance. The Divine Artist had done more than sketch her face. He had added strokes of the brush that gave character to his sketch. And it was this sweet strength of soul shining out through her countenance like church lights beaming through memorial windows that gave her face its beauty.

Just as this beauty differed from that of most girls of fifteen, so did the use she made of it differ from the end to which most youthful feminine beauty is put. Instead of being an element of weakness with Helen, her beauty was a tower of strength. Reared as she had been amid better although still commonplace surroundings, she had no taste for flirtations with the rough youths that she saw along the water-front. Nor indeed had she desire for flirtations of any sort. The business of feeding hungry mouths from an empty cupboard left no time for thought of romance. And in this business her good looks were of no small value to Helen.

As Mr. Hawkins gradually became more and more besotted, giving his wife ever less for food as his attendance at the free lunch grew more frequent, Helen was driven to forage for subsistence. If she could have gotten work, things might have been better for her and her mother; but, like Joe, she could not overcome circumstances. At first she lacked both schooling and

age. Then as time passed, and Mrs. Hawkins grew more frail and feeble, she could not have gone away to work, even had a task been provided. She could only stay on the coal barge and care for her declining mother. And finally, alas, her clothes alone would have prevented her from either obtaining or holding a job. She possessed nothing to cover her save a few faded rags that all but hung in shreds.

These told their own pitiful tale and served only to heighten the effect of the wistfully sweet face. The workmen on the piers, touched by her appearance and won by her simple dignity, scrupled not to help her—even at the cost of their employers. But this Helen did not suspect. Green bananas that the Italian fruit handlers guarded jealously from marauding small boys they gave her gladly. Hardly a crate of fruit or a box of oranges broke open that there were not abstracted from it before it could be renailed some of its contents to be kept for the ragged little girl with the blue eyes. When the steamers from the South lay in port, and their cargoes of watermelons were trundled out in unceasing streams and heaped high on the “farm,” a luscious sample seldom failed to find its way to the cabin of the *Mattie Ford*. Yet at best the table in that cabin was furnished but meagrely.

One day Helen went down the water-front to a pier where cocoanuts were being unloaded. A great steamer

from the tropics lay in the dock. Through her open hatchways great slings brought up the hairy cocoanuts by the hundreds, and swung them over to the pier shed. Occasionally some would roll from the heaped-up sling. Sometimes they fell back into the ship's hold or on the deck. Sometimes they dropped into the narrow strip of water twixt ship and pier. But mostly they tumbled out of the sling as the stevedores hauled this conveyor into the pier shed.

Into the sweating, swearing group of men handling this cargo, Helen unobtrusively pushed her way, waiting for a chance to seize an escaped cocoanut. Few fell from the slings, and those that did were picked up by the stevedores and thrown into the waiting wagons with the other nuts. Gradually Helen worked her way close to the gangway and waited. Presently a cocoanut fell and rolled down the sharp incline of the gangway. Helen sprang after it, slipped on a bit of orange peel, and shot head first into the water between ship and pier.

A cry went up from the stevedores. Instantly all was confusion. Some called for a rope. Others shouted for a ladder. The policeman at the pier entrance heard the hubbub. He pushed his way through the excited stevedores, who were peering down into the water. The hem of a ragged blue dress swirled into sight and the policeman dropped from the gangway. It was

Sullivan. He clutched the wisp of blue, drew a submerged figure toward him and raised the head above water. Then he was sucked under the pier by the rushing ebb-tide. They heard him bellowing down among the pilings. By this time some one had a rope. It was lowered on the down-stream side of the pier, and loud voices informed the rescuer. He saw the rope and struggled to it.

"Haul the kid up first," he called, as he made the rope fast under her arms.

She was lifted and laid on the floor. The big policeman followed. Helen was still conscious, but feeling very bad. She had swallowed much water. With dexterity the policeman laid the child on his rolled-up coat, bade her open her mouth, and soon relieved her of the water. Then without waiting for an ambulance or any other assistance, he picked the girl up in his arms and bore her to the *Mattie Ford*, with a great crowd trailing behind him.

Poor Mrs. Hawkins nearly died of fright when the big policeman crouched and entered the cabin, carrying the motionless child. But a word from Helen reassured her.

Truly it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. While Mrs. Hawkins was stripping and rubbing her daughter according to instructions from Sullivan, the latter was taking a good survey of the cabin. Nothing

escaped his practiced eye. He was cognizant of Hawkins' habits. He knew all about Helen's almost daily search for food. Many a time had he seen her hurrying along the water-front after a successful foraging trip. He recalled the little cripple, who had gotten away from him without a further interview. In a glance he read the entire sordid story of life on the *Mattie Ford*. With a freedom known only to kings and policemen he threw open the cupboard doors and noted the empty shelves. What he said would hardly bear repeating. Then, when Helen was dressed in dry garments—they were her mother's, for she had no extra ones of her own—and the policeman was certain that she was all right, he left the barge.

When he went off duty that evening, **he** made straight for Kelley's saloon. He found Hawkins and led him out on a deserted pier. Fifteen minutes later the two emerged from the pier shed. **What** the big policeman said to Hawkins will probably **never** be known. But Hawkins glared at him, as **he** walked away, with a look in which were mingled **both** hatred and fear. Then he shambled into the **cabin** of the *Mattie Ford*, laid five dollars on the table, and shuffled out without a word.

The next day Sullivan came aboard the coal barge during his noon relief. Helen and her mother greeted him with tears in their eyes. So little **of** kindness

came into the mother's life that a mere courtesy almost set her crying. Mrs. Hawkins began again to thank the policeman for what he had done ; and Helen, in her impulsive gratitude, could scarce refrain from kissing her big rescuer. Whereupon the embarrassed guardian of the law forbade them to say more.

"'Twasn't nothin'," he declared. "And what's a policeman for, anyway?" But just the same, any one with half an eye could see that he was vastly pleased. "I just come in to see how the kid's getting along," he began. And then as he saw the flush on Helen's face, he added, "Excuse me ; I mean how the young lady's standing her wetting." But before either woman could answer, he turned to Helen and said, "I don't need to be told. You look as fresh as a daisy in June." There was a pause. "Does Hawkins provide for you all right?" asked the policeman bluntly.

"Indeed, Mr. Sullivan," replied the mother, "he hasn't looked after us very well of late, but last night he came and gave me five dollars. I think that he must have been much affected by Helen's danger."

"Is that so?" rejoined the policeman. "I'm glad to hear it. Of course he was affected by the young lady's danger. Who wouldn't be?"

Thereat Helen's cheeks flamed redder than ever. Certainly the ducking in the Hudson had not chilled her blood.

Before Sullivan left the coal barge he knew the pitiful story of the Hawkins-Wainright family from beginning to end. He learned how capable Helen was with her needle; and he also guessed that her rags and her mother's illness made it impossible for her to go to work.

"How are the kids gettin' on?" he asked with real interest. Mrs. Hawkins told him. At first he shook his head dubiously; but when she told him about the milk and eggs they had begun to bring her, and how already she was feeling stronger, he smiled approval. "They'll do," he said. "They're a credit to you, Mrs. Hawkins."

The big policeman walked back to his post. He frowned as he thought the matter over. "I could get the girl a job if she could take it," he muttered after a time. "And I can get her some clothes anyway. Looks to me as though the best thing I can do is to keep them kids straight and see that the mother has food enough and ain't misused. I can do that, or I'll know the reason why." And the stern look that rested on Sullivan's face for a few minutes boded no good for Mr. Hawkins.

Sullivan had not overdrawn his power. Hardly a week passed thereafter that he did not come aboard the coal barge. One more interview he had with Hawkins after hours, and an eavesdropper might have heard the sound of more than conversation. That

interview was just after Hawkins had failed for the first week since Helen's wetting to leave a contribution on the table for the weekly food supply. Thereafter there was never a lapse in the food supply on the *Mattie Ford*.

"He always gives me money for food and he never beats us any more," Mrs. Hawkins told Sullivan on one of the latter's visits to the coal barge. "I can't account for it."

Compared to what it had been, life aboard the *Mattie Ford* became easy. Sullivan had obtained a few cast-off garments from a mission society, and these Helen deftly turned into dresses for her mother and herself. And though they were severely plain, they were at least decent. They had food, though it was plain and often coarse. At least there were few days when there was not something on the table to eat. And thanks to the sturdy little brothers milk and eggs were now not rarities.

Both Helen and her mother showed in their faces and conduct the effect of the change. Mrs. Hawkins, though still wracked by coughing spells, slowly grew stronger. Helen, with more time now, got out the school books she had brought from Alabama and treasured through all her difficulties. She, too, was looking forward to better times. She wanted to get ready for them when they came.

And yet, despite all this betterment, it was at best but a pitiful existence aboard the coal barge. Of feminine companionship the two had practically naught. The near-by tenement dwellers were rough and often immoral. The few women on the other coal barges were little better. Instinctively Mrs. Hawkins avoided them. She knew that friendliness with them would open up danger for her daughter. And Helen had met with enough advances from the youths of the neighborhood to fear them. So the two women lived in solitude. Of clothes they had only those made from the cast-off garments brought them by Mr. Sullivan; but these, despite the coal dust and grime, they kept clean and neat. For recreation they had no money. In fact they had money for nothing but food. For Hawkins shaved his appropriations as close to the bone as he dared.

Sometimes they made considerable journeys in the *Mattie Ford*. Once they went to New London. They visited other Sound ports. For the most part these journeys were enjoyable. In a high sea the waves not infrequently swept completely over the sturdy little barge. This always terrified them. But in calm weather they could sit above deck in the fresh air and enjoy the sunshine and the passing scenery. It was good for Mrs. Hawkins. And it was a welcome contrast to their existence in the foul dock in the Hudson,

where they were shut in on each side by towering pier sheds, with the coal shed and its clatter on the landward side, and all too often even the riverward view obstructed by great ships and barges in the dock.

So they existed week after week, denied human companionship, denied the innocent pleasures of society, without books or even newspapers, with barely clothing enough for decency, with no chance for recreation or entertainment that cost money, not always with all they desired to eat, beset by foul smells, shut in by unsightly ware sheds, and even in fear of brutality. And yet they were happy, in a way—so much better was this than what once had been. For Time was fighting on their side, and Hope had taken up his residence in the little cabin.

CHAPTER VI

JOE'S FIRST CRIME

BUT hope was not unmixed with misgiving and at times almost despair; for it was centred on one small boy of twelve years, who was adrift in the world, with no friendly hand to help him, and fighting for life itself against terrific odds. As time passed, the odds became heavier, for Joe was now approaching that period of his life when he would pass from boyhood into young manhood. Small wonder that his mother sometimes wept as she thought over his chances.

Could she have seen enough of Joe to know just how he lived, how he talked, what he did, she might have wept oftener. For Joe showed only his good side to his mother on his visits to the *Mattie Ford*.

He was now as well able to take care of himself as any wharf-rat. When he slept on a pier nowadays it was only because he did so from choice—usually to search out a cool spot during the scorching days of midsummer, when the city became one vast, superheated oven of brick and stone, in which the masses sweltered and gasped for breath, and from which the well-to-do fled as from the plague itself. More than

one night he passed on the hard cement floor of some sheltered area way; and when it was cool he often curled up for the night on a friendly grating, whence poured the warm air from an engine room. For a time during the pleasant weather in early summer he slept on a pile of sacks under a water-tank on the roof of a tall tenement. To reach this lair he had first to sneak through the cellar way, make a hazardous leap from a fence to the fire-escape, and climb seventy feet up a dizzy ladder.

His slumbers there were ended when, discovered by the janitor as he climbed the fire-escape, he sought safety in a wild flight over the roofs, while the hue and cry of "burglar" was raised, pistols were fired, and the police called in. Joe well knew that if he were caught no one would believe his explanation, even though the corroborating pile of sacks was under the water-tank, and that he would probably land in the reformatory. He got away only by a daring rush down a ladder, with a policeman hot after him. He dared not go back to this refuge again. And this misfortune, with many others, he added to his growing charge against the police. How he hated them!

The reason for all this vagrancy, if so it might be termed, was not that Joe had not the price of a bed, but because he was still hoarding his pennies for milk and eggs. Business was poor in these hot days. To

have paid for a bed would have taken about all he had. And to Joe, now grown tough as rawhide and accustomed to every form of hardship, beds seemed like an unnecessary luxury.

All this, of course, separated Joe from his brother. Slowly but surely the two were drifting apart. Henry, taking in almost daily more than Joe, was well able to look after his own fortunes. Always petted and protected by others, he had never gained that strength of character which was so conspicuous in Joe, and he had almost unavoidably become somewhat selfish. The favors that his deformity had brought him had led him to feel that it was his right not only to have bread, but to have it well buttered. At first, in an enthusiasm of sentiment, he had really denied himself to add to Joe's egg fund. Gradually he came to give grudgingly to it. Finally Joe no longer asked him for money, willing that he should spend on himself whatever he earned.

"Let him keep his money," soliloquized Joe. "He ain't never had no fun, and he ought to get something for bein' a cripple." So little by little the two brothers drifted apart.

Unquestionably Joe had grown tough. His language was now the language of the streets. He respected neither man nor God. He saw life with the cynical eye of bitter experience. He took to cigarettes. But

alcohol he would none of. His friends in the gang offered him drink, pressed him to join them on many a clandestine beer party. But Joe shunned the stuff as he would the devil. Always at the suggestion of drink there rose before his eyes the vision of a hulking, red-faced monster on a coal barge, coming after him with upraised club; for Joe knew as much as he knew anything that the evil light that shone from those awful eyes and the menace of that upraised club were nothing in the world but the outward sign of the inner demon that Hawkins had imbibed from a tall glass.

Being a lad of spirit, Joe could not let his enemies rest. So he became a police baiter. He loved nothing better than to worry those hated arms of the law. Many a time he hooked an apple from a fruit stand for the sole purpose of tempting a bluecoat to chase him.

Early one evening with a half dozen of his comrades, he had wandered far up-town. An Italian driving a fruit wagon came along. "Look at de dago," sang out one of the group. "Let's hold him up an' trim him fer de tings dat's in de wagon."

Before they knew what they were doing, the pack had surrounded the cart. Two of the boys grabbed the horse's bridle and stopped the animal. The sleepy Italian opened his eyes in wonder as his animal stopped. Then seeing the cause of the delay, he leaped from his seat, whip in hand, and made after the youngsters. It

was a fatal move. While he was unsuccessfully pursuing these two lads, the others swarmed up on the back of the wagon and stuffed their pockets full of fruit. The children of the neighborhood, seeing a chance for free fruit, joined in the robbery. When the driver got back, he had lost a good boxful of apples and oranges. His clamor brought a policeman, but Joe and his comrades vanished down a side street.

That was Joe's first crime, though he hardly realized that it was a crime, even while he was thinking it over as the gang huddled under a big platform near a factory, enjoying the results of their labors. Of course, Joe knew that it was not right to take other people's property. But to a youngster of twelve the matter of honesty is still somewhat of an academic question. Joe thought not at all about the ethical side of what he had done. The lesson he drew from the venture was that he had gotten something for nothing—or at least with so little effort that it seemed like nothing. To Joe, moral values were as yet intangible quantities. He was thinking of how this new process of getting things might be employed to some purpose.

The result of that cogitation was apparent a few nights later when Joe wandered down the water-front toward a certain pier where eggs are landed by a steamer from the South. Apparently the fates were with Joe. And in the light of what followed, it was

just as well that they were. By special arrangement a passenger steamer was to dock this night at this particular pier, and a regular member of the water-front police squad, accustomed to handling traffic at the piers, was detailed here, to await the arrival of this vessel and see that the disembarkation proceeded in orderly fashion. As the steamer was delayed at quarantine, the policeman improved the opportunity to rest his tired feet, stretching himself out in the watchman's snug box. The watchman, thinking two guardians unnecessary, slipped away for an evening's sport.

So it happened that when Joe and his comrades stealthily approached the pier, they found, to their amazement, the door slightly open, and the pier apparently deserted. They slipped into the great shed like ghosts, crouching near the doorway in the shadow, and peering sharply into the darkness within. All was quiet. They heard not so much as the scamper of a rat. When their eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, they groped their way among boxes and bales and bundles, until on the far end of the pier they found a pile of egg-carriers. In trying to remove a case from the top of the pile, they knocked a wooden box off of a ledge. It crashed to the floor with a tremendous racket, and the great shed echoed and reëchoed with the sound. The youthful pirates slid behind protecting mounds of merchandise and waited.

They had not long to wait. The form of the big policeman appeared in the doorway, sharply outlined against the glare from the arc lights along the waterfront. In a minute there was a crackling and sputtering overhead, and the great lights in the pier shed blazed out, making the vast warehouse as bright as day. The policeman swung the door to and hooked it. Then he drew his night-stick and started down the pier shed.

All was quiet. No sound but his own footsteps broke the stillness. He came on slowly, peering behind every bale and bundle, passing unexamined nothing behind which an intruder might lurk. On and on he came. As he neared the end of the pier he seemed puzzled. He had neither heard nor seen anything suspicious since that first crash. But he was too practiced a policeman to be deceived by the stillness. He knew that it had taken human hands to dislodge a box heavy enough to make such a noise. He was within ten feet of the egg-carriers before he had a clue to the whereabouts of the intruders. Then a kind of scratching, burrowing sound came to his ears. He listened intently, tiptoed over to a pile of burlap and sail-cloth, and caught the foot of an urchin who was worming his way under the pile. It was Joe. While the policeman was drawing him, squirming and kicking, from his refuge, the other young pirates scuttled for the door, unhooked it, and disappeared.

Grasping Joe firmly by the shoulder, the policeman started for the station-house. As he passed the watchman's box, his eye fell on the clock. It was almost time for the steamer.

"I'll have to lock the little devil in here and take him to the station after the boat's docked," muttered the policeman. "It's little sleep I get this night."

He turned into the box and locked the door. Then he took a good look at his youthful prisoner. Under the rags and dirt he saw a little soul. He had children of his own, had this policeman. He looked Joe over long and intently.

"What's your name?" he asked presently.

"Joe Wainright," said the prisoner, foreseeing no need to speak falsely.

The effect on the policeman was remarkable. He took another look at the lad, then bent forward in his chair and peered straight into Joe's eyes. He saw that they were honest eyes. "Is old Hawkins your stepfather?" he asked.

Joe was startled. The cop knew him. He nodded his head.

"So you're the lad that ran away to seek his fortune, are you?" he said.

Joe was silent.

"It's a nice end you've come to—arrested as a thief."

Joe hung his head sullenly.

"What was you trying to steal?" There was no reply. "You won't talk, eh?" said the policeman frowning. "I've a notion to hand you over to Hawkins. He'll make you talk quick enough ——"

"Don't do that!" interrupted the youngster. "Please don't do that. I'll tell you all you want to know."

"All right," said the policeman, "but be sure you tell me the truth."

"I will. Honest I will," replied Joe. "Cross me heart on it," and he suited the deed to the words.

"Very well, then, what was you trying to steal?"

"Eggs," said Joe.

"Likely," commented the policeman.

"Take me oath," insisted Joe. "Dat's de truth."

"What did you want with eggs?"

"I wanted 'em for me mudder." And here the little eyes filled with tears. "Honest I did," went on Joe. "Me mudder's got de con, an' de doc says she can get well if she can only git eggs. I buys her eggs when I has de cush, but me business is on de bum, and I can't buy her none, so I tries to get some here."

The policeman knew that Joe was telling the truth. It was Sullivan. "Joe," he said, "you did right to try to help your mother, but you took the wrong way to do it. Suppose you are convicted as a thief, and

sent away to prison and disgraced for life. Is that going to help your mother any?"

Joe was silent and thoughtful. "No," he said after a pause. "But how *am* I to get de eggs? Me mudder's got to have 'em."

"But what about the man who owns the eggs?" urged the policeman.

"It won't hurt him to lose a few," argued Joe. "And besides he won't never miss 'em, dere's so many."

"Suppose some one wanted to sell papers, and not having money to buy any, took some of yours," argued Sullivan.

"Dat's different," said Joe. "I needs all de papes I has. And anyway, I'd like to see any bloke try it."

"How do you know this egg merchant doesn't need all his eggs?"

"Aw, he's got lots of 'em. He wouldn't miss a few."

"Joe," said the policeman, "suppose it's a cold night and you are trying to sell five more papers to get a bed for the night and I came along and stole three of your five papers. Three papers wouldn't be much of a loss, but wouldn't it make a difference to you?"

Joe was silent.

"You don't know how much the owner of these eggs needs them. Maybe he needs every egg he's got to pay his rent. If you steal them maybe he can't pay

his rent and he and his family will be turned out on the street."

"I didn't tink about dat," said Joe.

"Now, Joe, I'm a friend of yours and ——"

"Nix. You're a cop," said Joe.

"And can't a cop be a friend?"

"Frends don't chase you wid a night-stick."

"But we only do that to protect somebody from annoyance or loss."

"What do de cops run me away from de ferry fer, so I can't make a livin'?" demanded Joe.

"Did you ever stop to think that if there weren't any cops you wouldn't have any papers to sell?"

Joe was puzzled. "Watcha mean?" he asked.

"Why, somebody who is bigger and stronger than you are would take your papers away from you. The reason they don't is because they're afraid of the cops. Isn't it better to be chased once in a while when you are in the road than never to have any papers to sell?"

Joe knew only too well that Sullivan spoke the truth. He lived in a world where, as far as its inhabitants dared, they substituted might for right. So he was silent.

Suddenly he said, "If you're a fren' of mine, what are you goin' to do to prove it?"

"I'm going to give you another chance. I'm going to let you go. Am I your friend?"

"Sure," said Joe. "Shake." And he thrust out a grimy paw.

"Then if I'm your friend," went on Sullivan, after the hand shake, "I want you to do something for me; will you?"

"What is it?" asked Joe. "I ain't no snitcher, you know."

"I don't want you to snitch, Joe. I want you to be a good boy. I know all about your family ——"

"Are you de cop me mudder tells me about?" broke in Joe. "De one wat saves Helen an' brings me mudder de swell cloes?"

"Yes, I'm that cop."

"Shake," said Joe, again thrusting forth his hand. "Youse me fren' all right."

"Well, then, Joe," resumed Sullivan, "I want you to promise me that you will never again steal anything. If you don't want to promise because it's right, promise because you want to show your thanks for what I did for your mother."

"I promise," said Joe.

"And don't tease the cops. They're your friends."

"I won't," said Joe.

"Now you can go," said Sullivan, throwing open the door.

"Tanks," said Joe, as he vanished into the night.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have done it," mused Sullivan.

“He was trying to rob the pier all right. But I’ve only done to him what I hope some other cop will do to my kids if ever they get into trouble.” Then he walked to the end of the pier to meet the incoming steamer.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE POLICE DRAG-NET

JOE left the egg pier a wiser and also somewhat better boy. The talk with Sullivan had made a deep impression on him. He had seen "de cops" in a new light. Never before had he thought of a policeman as having aught of sympathy for the street urchins they so frequently "chased."

If Sullivan could have told Joe more about the law, why law is necessary, how beneficial it really is, and how imperative it becomes for each one of us, children as well as grown-ups, to obey the law, the seed would have fallen on fertile ground. For after Joe learned that Sullivan was that paragon among policemen who had been helping his mother and sister, he would have accepted without hesitation whatever that worthy chose to tell him. Joe's criterion of men was their deeds. Sullivan *might* be a cop, but he had helped Joe's mother—and that settled it. That made him in Joe's estimation a man, a real man, with feelings and a heart and the will to help where he could. But Sullivan had not thought to embrace his opportunity to enlighten the little wanderer, and so Joe went away feeling much as

ever toward the law, but vastly changed in his ideas as to policemen.

Instinctively Joe felt that this man would help him. Sullivan had helped Joe's mother; Sullivan knew that Joe was trying to help that mother; there wasn't any doubt about it—Sullivan would help him. Through all the hardships and struggles of the months that had passed since he left the *Mattie Ford*, Joe had had to struggle on alone. To be sure, he had Henry, but Henry was a burden rather than a support. There was no one to whom he could tell his troubles, no one with whom he could discuss his difficulties. The burden of life had at times fallen on his shoulders with crushing weight.

Though he had now become callous and somewhat indifferent, he could not forget those early days of fear and struggle. And even yet there lingered deep in his heart, as there is in the heart of every man, an unacknowledged longing for some one to love him, some one to help him. This feeling Joe did not acknowledge in so many words, but it was there, no matter how rigidly he repressed it. Now it found expression in the belief that Sullivan would help him.

Indeed poor Joe needed help. In his own way he had been trying hard to do right, but like the beetle butting against the window-pane, he got nowhere. Months had gone by and he was no nearer accomplish-

ing his purpose than he had been at the start. If only some one could have helped Joe, if only some one older and wiser than Joe could have guided his footsteps and cheered his struggles, what a mighty difference it would have made. If just one soul in all that seething city could have taken an interest in the lad, how it might have lightened his way, how it might have kept his feet from straying. But there had been no friend—not one. Small wonder that Joe yearned for friendship.

Having given his word that he would not steal again, Joe meant to keep it. That meant that he must never again “hook” an apple from a fruit stand, “swipe” green bananas from the Italian fruit handlers at the piers, or “crook” watermelons on the “farm”—for of all these minor misdemeanors Joe had been guilty. What time had previously gone into such pranks was now devoted to paper selling. Indeed Joe became for the time a model of industry. Early and late he was on the streets, crying his papers.

And as though fate must vent its irony on Joe himself, it was this very industry that got him into the clutches of the law. From the other newsies Joe had long ago learned that the law made it necessary for all boys of less than fourteen years to secure a permit before they could peddle papers. To Joe this was but part and parcel of that unwarranted interference with

personal liberty, which he understood the law to be. Naturally he gave no heed to the mandate. In this respect he had many fellows. Seldom were these "unpermitted" newsies molested. The police were too busy dealing with offenses of moment to notice such slight infractions of the law. The special squad detailed to enforce the law was inadequate and indeed indifferent. Policemen do not relish the duty of locking up small boys. But just now the papers were full of a pitiful accident that had befallen one of these "unpermitted" newsies. The resultant wave of public feeling stirred this special squad to activity. And when they flung their drag-net about the great ferry one afternoon Joe was the one fish enmeshed.

If possible, he hated the law now more than ever. If he couldn't sell papers without a permit, and he knew he couldn't obtain one because he was not attending school, how was he going to earn a living? And how was his mother to get eggs?

Very, very bitter at heart was Joe as he rode in the big patrol-wagon to the Children's Society before his arraignment at the Children's Court. When he arrived there it was found that there still remained time for his arraignment that afternoon, so Joe merely had his face washed clean, and was bundled off to answer at the bar of justice for his infraction of the law.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEOPLE *vs.* JOE WAINRIGHT

THE day's session was practically over when they hustled Joe into the court-room. The Judge had just shaken the immaculate hand of Mr. Meredith Everington, the great corporation lawyer, who had called to see him on a legal matter in which both were interested, when Joe was haled to the bar of justice.

"Another?" said the Judge. "I thought we were through."

"This is the last, Your Honor," said an attendant. "He was just brought in."

"One moment, please, while I hear this case, Mr. Everington," said His Honor, "and then I will be with you. Won't you take this chair while you wait?" He pushed a seat toward his caller.

The lawyer sat down stiffly beside him. Something in the atmosphere displeased him. He sniffed the air openly. It was the smell of poverty, as some one has termed it—the scent of unwashed human beings that not even the partly opened windows could overcome. As he sniffed, Mr. Everington looked out over the spectators' benches. A number of ragged men and

women were still in court. Mr. Everington's lip curled with contempt. It was very different from the palatial halls of the Supreme Court where he was accustomed to argue for his rich clients. Disgust was plainly written on his face.

Never before had Joe presented such a pitiable appearance. He still wore the suit of gray, rolled up at wrist and ankle, but now it was soiled beyond recognition, torn, and tattered, and hanging in great folds about his little body. The bit of flannel shirt, once gray, that peeped above the collar of his coat was almost black. In startling contrast was Joe's little face, so long eclipsed by grime, but now shining like the sun from the vigorous scrubbing it had had. The cheeks were rosy as a girl's. The wavy brown hair, now neatly combed, set off the well-shaped forehead and the strong, little nose. The wide-set blue eyes looked straight into the Judge's, fearless but perplexed. And on the little countenance was written such a story of childish innocence and worldly wisdom that the Judge's attention was instantly riveted on the youthful prisoner.

For a full half minute the Judge surveyed him, sweeping his eye from the shining face to the worn-out shoes and back again.

"Did you ever see the like!" he exclaimed, turning to Mr. Everington.

"Disgusting!" answered the lawyer.

The faintest suggestion of a frown passed over the Judge's face. "What a puzzle he presents," he said. "That face and those rags. I wonder what the story is behind them."

"Some miserable beggar, doubtless," replied Mr. Everington, making no effort to conceal his disgust.

All this time Joe had been watching the Judge, as a wild animal watches his captor; yet his eyes contained no hint of fear.

"The People *vs.* Joe Wainright," read the Judge, picking up the typewritten complaint that a clerk laid before him. "Is that your right name?" he asked.

"Yes," said Joe.

"Well, Joe, what are you here for?"

"I dunno," replied the prisoner; "I ain't done nothin'. Ast him." And he nodded at the policeman.

"He was selling papers without a permit, Your Honor," spoke up the bluecoat.

"I see," said the Court. "How old are you, Joe?"

"Twelve years," answered Joe.

"Where do you live?"

"I don't live nowheres."

"You must live somewhere, Joe. Where do you sleep?"

"I used to sleep under a water-tank on a roof, but de cops chased me and now I ain't got no place to sleep."

"But you must sleep somewhere. Where do you pass the nights?"

"Sometimes I sleeps in a hallway, sometimes in a wagon; an' when it's cold I goes down to a fact'ry on West Street where dere's a warm gratin'."

"Are your parents living?" asked the Judge, a note of pity creeping into his voice.

"Me mudder is," said Joe, "but me fadder's dead. Dat is, me right fadder is."

"Then you have a stepfather?"

Joe nodded his head.

"What is his business?"

"He's captain of a coal barge," replied Joe.

"Does your mother live with him?"

"Sure."

"Then why aren't you living at home, Joe?"

"I can't," explained Joe. "Me fadder beats me an' I runs away, an' me mudder says he's goin' to kill me if I goes back."

The Judge's face grew stern. "Does he drink, Joe?" he asked.

"Sure," said Joe. "He's drunk all de time."

"When did you run away?" asked the Court. Joe told him.

"Why, that was more than a year ago," said the Judge. "Do you mean to say that you've been living in the streets of New York all that time?"

"Sure," said Joe.

"Where do you go to school?"

"Go to school?" queried Joe. "I don't go to school. I ain't got time. I has to earn a livin'."

"Bless me," murmured the Judge. "Twelve years old and too busy earning a living to go to school." He paused for a moment, deep in thought. "Joe," said His Honor suddenly, "have you ever been arrested?"

"Nix," said Joe, "but de cops chased me lots of times, and once one of 'em got me. But he let me go again. I ain't never been locked up."

A smile flitted across the face of the Judge. "What were you doing the time you were caught?" he asked.

"Stealin' eggs," answered Joe.

The judicial countenance became grave. "Stealing eggs—and the officer let you go? Who was the policeman?"

"I ain't a-goin' to tell," said Joe. "He's a fren' of mine."

The Judge grew stern. "Did the officer take some of the money you got by selling the eggs?" he demanded sharply.

"You don't understand, Judge," replied Joe. "I didn't get no eggs. I was only tryin' to. De cop got me before I had 'em. Den he gives me a talkin' to an' lets me go."

"I suppose he was lazy and didn't want to be bothered with bringing you here. That sort of thing has got to stop. I want you to tell me that policeman's name."

"I won't," said Joe, with decision. "Didn't I tell you he was a fren' of mine?"

"If you are going to defy the Court," said His Honor severely, "I shall have to send you away until you are willing to tell me what I want to know."

The little face began to quiver. Joe jabbed his doubled fists into his eyes and brushed the tears aside. "You mustn't send me away, Judge," he said in a voice, half pleading, half defiant. "What'll me mudder do if I goes away? Who'll get de eggs for her?"

"Did your mother put you up to stealing eggs?" asked the Court.

"You don't understan', Judge," said the little prisoner, the tears now flowing unchecked. "Me mudder's got de con, and de doc says she can get well if she only has eggs, and dere ain't nobody but me to get 'em for her."

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the Judge. "Do you

mean to tell me that your mother has consumption and that you have been trying to supply her with eggs?" And then, with a sudden insight, he added, "And is that why you sleep on roofs and over gratings—so you can buy your mother eggs?"

"Sure," said Joe. "I promised Sulli—I mean de cop I wouldn't never steal nothin' more, so I can't afford a bed."

"Joe, you're a good boy," suddenly remarked the Judge, and in his own eyes there was more than a suspicion of moisture. "I'm going to see that you have a chance to go to school and learn something."

"And what'll me mudder do?" demanded Joe, his face beginning to pucker up again.

"Your mother will be all right, Joe. I'll order your father to take care of her and to support you, too, while you attend school."

"'Tain't no use, Judge," said Joe. "Sullivan told him to do dat, too. If he won't mind Sullivan, how are you going to make him do anything?"

"Sullivan? Who's Sullivan?"

"He's a cop," said Joe slowly.

"Is he the policeman that caught you stealing eggs?"

"No-o," said Joe, head down.

"Tell me the truth, Joe. I'll never say a word about the eggs."

"Den he is," said Joe.

"So policeman Sullivan prevented you from stealing eggs and tried to make your father help your mother," said the Judge. "He can't be such a bad policeman after all."

"Bad?" exclaimed Joe. "Why, Judge, he's de best cop on de force. He gives Hawkins—dat's me step-fadder—a hell of a beatin', I hears, and he jumps overboard and saves me sister Helen when she falls off de dock tryin' to get a cocoanut."

"Well, Joe," said the Judge, "I think that we can manage this stepfather of yours. I shall have him brought before me. I am going to send you to a home for boys, where you can be cared for properly and be educated."

"Oh! don't do dat, Judge, don't do dat," begged Joe. "You don't know Hawkins. I can take care of meself all right, Judge. All I wants is a chance to woik. Won't you help me to get me woikin' papers, Judge? I goes to all de storekeepers and asks for woik, and dey all tells me dey can't hire me till I gets me woikin' papers. I can do de woik, Judge, but I can't get de papers. Won't you help to get 'em, Judge? If you will, Judge, I can get a reg'lar job, and den I can take care of me mudder."

"Joe," said the Court, dabbing his eyes with a handkerchief, "you're a good boy and I am going to help you all I can."

"Den you'll get me de woikin' papers?"

"No, Joe. But I'll see that your mother is taken care of, and that she has all the eggs she needs and other things besides. But I want you to help me all you can. Will you?"

"Sure," said Joe.

"Well, then, Joe, I want you to go to school and study hard."

Joe's face fell again, but this time the tears were absent. He made no response.

"It's this way, Joe. If you don't go to school, you can never earn much money. If you get an education, you can get a job at a good salary. Isn't it worth while?"

"Ye-es," replied Joe, but he was evidently far from convinced.

"I am going to send you to the Society for a few days, Joe," said the Judge, "while I find out how we can best help you."

"An' me mudder?" queried Joe.

"I'll not forget her," replied the Court. Then he turned eagerly to Mr. Everington, saying, "Did you ever hear anything so touching?"

Mr. Everington was just stifling a yawn. Plainly he was bored.

CHAPTER IX

JOE FINDS A FRIEND AT COURT

TOGETHER the wealthy lawyer and the Judge left the stuffy little court-room at Eleventh Street and Third Avenue.

"My wife is using my car this afternoon," said Mr. Everington, "so I cannot offer you a ride. Where shall we go to talk over the Ambler will—for it is that which brings me to you?"

"If it's agreeable to you," returned Judge Wilmot, "let's walk. I'd like a little exercise."

"Very well," said Mr. Everington.

He gave the Judge a cigar, lighted one for himself, and in a moment the two were sauntering through the crowded streets of the great East Side. For an hour they discussed the Ambler will. Finally Mr. Everington said, "There is nothing more we can do about it until you can come to my office and see the documents themselves. When will you come?" The Judge named a date.

They walked on in silence for a moment. Their ramble had brought them east through Tompkins Square, then south into the very heart of the Ghetto.

To the lawyer it was a strange experience. His journeys in New York consisted mostly in swift flights up and down Broadway and Fifth Avenue, or other asphalted thoroughfares, in a luxurious motor-car. This great roaring, seething centre of life, where humanity is packed together, thousands to the acre, was novel to him.

He surveyed the towering tenements, rearing their reeking walls five, six, seven stories into the air, making of the streets between narrow canyons from which the very sun of heaven was excluded. Up the face of every tenement zigzagged an iron fire-escape, where, contrary to law, bird-cages, bread boxes, flower-pots, bottles of milk, babies' blankets, drying clothes, and even mattresses and bedding rested or hung in the desperate attempt of the cramped dwellers to enlarge their quarters or to find some place where they could secure a ray of God's sunlight—free elsewhere, but here to be had only for money and for price.

He looked at the crowded shops, no larger than the tiny living apartments, and jammed from floor to ceiling, with barely room enough to move about in without knocking the goods from their resting places. He was curiously interested in the articles for sale. Here was a great display of condiments—dill pickles and mustards and pickled onions and preserved cauliflower and chow-chow; alongside was a brass shop, with its curious Turkish and Russian wares—its flaring-lipped

pitchers, its branching candlesticks, modeled after those in the Jewish tabernacle, its great burnished trays, its tinkling chimes, its marvelous lamp-shades, scrolled with the alluring tracery of the Orient ; while in the next shop mattresses, beds, and thick, padded comforts assaulted the eye with their garish colors.

Here was an electrical supply house, its show-window jammed with burglar-alarms—which, heaven knows, were needed in the neighborhood—and the latest styles in gaudy glass globes. And here was a Jewish wine-shop, with curious bottles in the window, and sawdust from the floor trailing out on the sidewalk ; and beyond, in a darksome cellar, was a bakery, whence issued the strange, pungent odor of Hebrew cookery. Next came a provision store, its window piled with dry and withered fish—smoked herrings and other bloaters—and pyramids of dirty eggs, and canned goods, and pickles—always pickles—and bread and prunes, and a score of other edibles, thrown together in dirty, dusty promiscuity. And farther on was a butcher shop, bearing on its window the three-lettered sign in Hebrew that all might know it as a shop of the true faith, a kosher shop, where everything was done according as Moses commanded, where the meats and poultry were butchered according to the rites of the ancient faith, and where fowls still unplucked dangled by the necks in the show-window.

The gutters were lined with a solid row of push-carts—replicas of the crowded shops with their confusing jumble of contents. Here was a vender of fruits, his two-wheeled cart held level by a prop at one end, with his wares heaped in towering pyramids of orange and red. Here was a dealer in women's stockings and underwear, holding out on extended arm samples of the bargains piled in his cart behind him. Here stood a dealer in perfumes, powders, necklaces, bracelets, rings, and other pinchbeck bijoux. Now came a cart filled with the products of a bakery—perhaps the one just passed—and bulging with the great, round, brown loaves that are sold by the slice, with the curious, twisted, seed-covered rolls, with little cakes, all foreign to the lawyer's eye, and all distinctive of the Ghetto. And here stood a cart with household furnishings, and another with dress-goods, bolt upon bolt, and piece upon piece, with the loose ends hanging over the edge of the cart to attract the eye, and next stood a pickle wagon, filled with casks and kegs and buckets, each containing some condiment dear to the East Side palate. And so on, block after block, the interminable lines of carts filled with a million articles, as confused and confusing as the babel around them.

For at every cart the owner was hawking his wares, calling their virtues, urging, persuading, pleading with pedestrians to buy, holding out samples of his bargains,

or chaffering with those who stopped to examine his offerings. Small boys and little children by the score, the hundred, the thousand, scampered between the carts, scurried along the roadway, sprawled on the sidewalks, blocked the tenement steps, all shouting, and shrieking, and crying, or laughing. Along the sidewalk flowed the home-coming masses, filling it and spilling over into the street, one great, noisy, garrulous, polyglot stream, that swept on as unending, as ceaseless, as irresistible as a crested flood—a human torrent, ragged, unwashed, odorous, sweeping on to these foul and crowded warrens that only in mockery could be called homes.

And as they walked only disdain and disgust wrote themselves upon the lawyer's countenance. He drew away from the passing throng, and shrank from the jostling thousands as though they were defiled. No sign of pity softened his face, no trace of human kindness.

"Let us get out of this," he said. "It is disgusting."

"Mr. Everington," said the Judge, as they turned back toward the accustomed highways of commerce, "I do not ordinarily lay many things to divine interposition. But somehow I can't help feeling that Providence sent you into my court to-day. An opportunity has been laid directly before you, a chance to save that little Wainright boy. He's a fine little lad and all he

needs to come through to a fine manhood is the help of some older man. He needs a big brother to guide him over the rough spots. I want you to be that big brother. Will you?"

"I do not understand you," said Mr. Everington coldly.

"Don't you know what a Big Brother is?" asked the Judge. "Haven't you heard of the Big Brother Movement?"

"No," replied the lawyer. "I am not interested in missionary movements."

"This is not a missionary movement," said the Judge. "A Big Brother does not have to belong to any movement or any society. To be a Big Brother all you have to do is to take an interest in some unfortunate child, some one that has no one to look after him, and help him along. I don't mean to give him money—that's the last thing we like to have done—but to show the boy you are interested in him, to show him that there is some one who cares what becomes of him, to advise him, to help him when necessary. There aren't any prescribed duties. All you need to do is to do what your heart and your mind tell you is right, see the lad occasionally, show him the better side of life, encourage him, stimulate his ambition. We have an organization called the Big Brother Movement, but that is purely for convenience. I don't ask you to join

it. But I do want you to be a big brother to little Joe. Will you?"

"I am not interested in that sort of thing," repeated the lawyer. "Besides I can't afford it. It would take time—and time is money."

"Mr. Everington," said the Judge, after a pause, "I shall not take that answer as final. You are too big a man to mean that. You can afford the time, for you are a man of great wealth. Men like you owe much to their country. I know of no way you can use your talents to better advantage than by helping this little boy to help himself. Perhaps some one befriended you in time of need, helped you over a rough spot. Repay that debt now. Perhaps you were so fortunately situated that you never needed help. Perhaps you had a good father. This little lad has no father. He has no one in all the world to care for and help him. He has come dangerously close to becoming a criminal. He stands at the dividing line, and you can help him to be a man or let him go—perhaps to live a life like this we see around us."

"It sounds very pretty, sir," rejoined the lawyer, as cold as ever, "but what would my wife say if I brought home a brat like that?"

"I cannot believe," returned the Judge, "but that you will feel different when you have thought the matter over. The thought still persists that it was more

than chance that brought you into my court to-day. Think it over, Mr. Everington. Here is a lad ready to be made into a fine man—a lad, industrious, willing, strong, independent. I have seen few boys who impressed me so favorably. But he needs some one to guide him. I shall not finally dispose of his case until I hear from you. And I shall be very greatly disappointed if you fail me.”

CHAPTER X

MR. EVERINGTON AND THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

WHEN Meredith Everington parted from Judge Wilmot, he dismissed for good and all as he thought the memory of the dirty little beggar he had seen in the court-room, and the Justice's plea for his help. Had it not been for his need of the Judge's assistance in the Ambler will case, and his consequent fear of offending him, he would have cut short the Judge's effort in behalf of Joe. The thing was preposterous! The very idea of his fathering or rather big brothering a ragged little street urchin! To think of Meredith Everington, rich, influential, powerful, immaculately dressed, running after a street arab! Bah, the very idea was disgusting. He wondered at himself for allowing the Judge to finish his harangue. He dismissed the matter from his mind, bought an evening newspaper, called a taxicab, and was soon bowling homeward.

At dinner that evening he told his wife about his visit to the East Side—not because he was thinking of Joe, but because the incident had been unusual, in fact somewhat in the nature of an adventure. The ramble

east of the Bowery had been to Meredith Everington much as a tour of Whitechapel or the slums of Constantinople is to many another. And as it is the new and unusual that leaves the sharpest impress on the mind, so now Mr. Everington was able to give to his wife a clear picture of the strange scenes he had witnessed. For accuracy of detail his picture would have done credit to a camera. Truly he had a wonderful mind. When he had finished his word-painting, he added with a laugh, "And Judge Wilmot asked me to play the good Samaritan to a dirty little beggar that was brought into court—wanted me to keep an eye on him—be a Big Brother he called it—to a ragamuffin."

"Well, I hope you didn't agree to any such silly proposal," said Mrs. Everington haughtily.

"I rather think not," replied the lawyer. "Meredith Everington has something to do in the world besides play nurse-maid to a vagabond."

"I should think so," said his wife coldly, and the discussion ended.

And yet, though Mr. Everington told himself and his proud wife that the incident was concluded, the thought of Joe would bob up. Rather, like Banquo's ghost, it would not down. For strangely enough first one thing and then another tended to keep alive in the lawyer's mind the pitiful picture of Joe and the Judge's plea in his behalf.

After dinner that evening Mrs. Everington went off to a gathering of some of her women friends. Mr. Everington, thus freed from the social duties to which his wife almost nightly dragged him, retired to his library for an evening of real enjoyment. A fire was crackling merrily in the open hearth. He drew up an armchair, adjusted the light, produced a pipe—a thing tabooed in the presence of his wife—then stretched out before the blaze, with his feet on a foot-rest. Here was solid comfort. Silently he invoked blessings on that evening's gathering that barred man from its portals.

Keen of mind, Mr. Everington enjoyed nothing so much as a clever story of deduction. He picked up a brand-new volume of the "Tales of Sherlock Holmes." Before he had read a dozen pages, the Baker Street irregulars trooped into the narrative—that band of street arabs that the great detective was wont to employ when all else failed—and before he knew it, Mr. Everington's thoughts wandered from the printed sheet before him, and instead of black type on a white background he saw a ruddy face peeping out of a great, grimy, gray coat, and the tear-filled eyes of Joe begging for a chance to work.

No pity stirred the heart of Meredith Everington, but a new thought came into his mind—here was ability going to waste. Efficiency was Mr. Meredith's hobby. Through his close association with the

moneyed interests he had been able to bring about in steel-mill and manufacturing plant the end of the primitive rule of thumb and the substitution of modern methods of efficiency. Now, through the agency of the Baker Street irregulars, he saw in Joe an economic waste—for though Joe's pitiful story had touched him not at all, he had quickly noticed that Joe was acute and clever. Now he fell to thinking how Joe's abilities might be used. His quick, incisive brain saw a hundred ends to which this youth, this unspoiled, virgin mind, might be moulded.

"But what is all this to me?" he suddenly exclaimed in irritation, as he realized that his book lay forgotten in his lap.

He read on and on, gripped by tense interest in the search for the real criminal the while circumstances pointed falsely to an innocent man. Again his book rested on his knee, while he pondered o'er the tale. His mind went back to his younger days when just such a thing had occurred to him. He shuddered to think what would have been his fate had the real criminal not been discovered. Certainly he would never have become the celebrated Meredith Everington that now sat reading in his beautiful library.

In retrospect he reviewed the entire case. If ever circumstances pointed to an innocent man, surely they had pointed to him. The police had been well enough

satisfied that he was the culprit. He remembered how hopeless his situation had seemed to him. Then he thought of the man who had saved him—one of his employers, an elderly man who had refused to have him arrested until he had thoroughly satisfied himself of his employee's guilt. He recalled his feeling of relief when the real culprit was found. Even now he felt an unspeakable debt of gratitude to that old employer. Had he not stood faithfully by him, Meredith Everington's career had been blighted at the start. Then he fell to wondering why the old man had taken such an interest in him. He recalled the old man's simple statement, when he himself was pouring out his thanks, that he would have done as much for any young man, that each of us owed it as a duty to God and man to help those younger and less fortunate than ourselves.

Then there came into his mind the words of Judge Wilmot: "Perhaps some one befriended you in time of need—helped you over a rough spot. Repay that debt now." Deep in the lawyer's heart a still, small voice began to speak. "This is the chance to repay that debt," it said.

"Bah!" growled Mr. Everington aloud. "I owe nothing to anybody. What I have I earned. The Judge was right—I *am* wealthy. But I am going to be wealthier. I want more, more. My time is money.

Who is this vagabond that I should give him of my time? The idea is absurd. I will write and tell the Judge so."

When Meredith Everington rode to his office the next day, and for many days thereafter, he noticed what previously he had hardly observed, or what, if he had observed it, had made no impression on him—the fact that the streets were filled with boys, some ragged, some well-dressed, some doing one thing, some another, but all apparently working for their bread and butter. Never before had he realized how many boys in the great city have to earn their own living. He saw some carrying heavy bundles, some scurrying with messages, some blacking boots, some selling papers, some peddling, some even hunting through the refuse cans for crusts of bread. As he looked at one particularly pitiful lad, a little cripple selling newspapers, the words of Judge Wilmot again came into his head: "This little lad has no father. He has no one in all the world to care for and help him. He stands at the dividing line."

And in the lawyer's heart a still voice went on, "You can help him to be a man."

On the Sabbath Mr. Everington, as was his wont, attended the fashionable church of which he was one of the pillars. He listened to the well-paid choir render with faultless technique an anthem that was a marvel

of vocal gymnastics. Then, well-satisfied, he settled himself in his seat for his accustomed nap. The morning's lesson was read, and as the great lawyer dozed off, the minister was just announcing his text: "I have you on my heart." When next Mr. Everington opened his eyes, the sermon was just ending. "In this simple sentence," the pastor was saying, "we have the essence of Christianity. 'I have you on my heart.' The world is too big for any of us to father it. Only the divine heart is great enough for that. But each of us can find, right at our door, some one to love and protect, to guide and assist. Perhaps it is some friend or business acquaintance, perhaps some relative. Best of all, it may be some child, whose life will be made or marred according as we do our duty or fail in it. God has a marvelous way of throwing these helpless ones in our path—and who can doubt that when one of these little ones is led to our door it is the call of God. If any such come in your pathway, do not be false to your duty. God put them there. He wants you to have them on your heart."

CHAPTER XI

JOE AND HIS BIG BROTHER EVERINGTON

“**E**LISE,” said Mr. Everington to his wife at breakfast one morning, taking refuge the while behind his newspaper, “I think I’ve found a good caddie at last. It’s that youngster Judge Wilmot told me about.”

There was a long and ominous silence. Mrs. Everington was looking sternly toward her husband, waiting for the newspaper to come down. It was not lowered. When she could contain herself no longer, Mrs. Everington burst out, “I expected something of this sort. You’re fool enough to do anything.”

“But, Elise,” protested her husband, now laying aside his paper, and apparently girding himself for a struggle, “there is surely nothing reprehensible in giving employment to a needy little boy. He’ll make an ideal caddie. He’s quick, sharp-eyed, and clever. And those caddies at the club are such lazy, dishonest whelps! Why, I lose balls by the dozen just because they’re too shiftless to find them, or rather to find them for anybody but themselves.”

“It’s likely that a beggar from the streets will be honest!” sneered Mrs. Everington.

"Elise," said Mr. Everington, "this little youngster all alone has been trying to provide eggs for his tubercular mother, and when he was caught robbing an egg pier ——"

"What did I tell you?" broke in Mrs. Everington. "Of course he's a thief."

"And when he was caught robbing an egg pier," continued the lawyer, ignoring the interruption, "he promised the policeman who got him that he'd never steal any more, and he has kept his word. A lad that has that sort of moral courage will not steal from a friend who is trying to help him along."

"I was waiting for you to say that," replied Mrs. Everington sharply. "Now you have shown your true colors. Your hiring of the lad as a caddie is only a pretext. You intend to do just what Judge Wilmot asked you to do. I never saw anything like you men. Talk about women not knowing their own minds. Why, anybody can twist you around their little finger. I wish I had hold of that Judge for a minute. I'd give him a piece of my mind."

"Well, Elise," said Mr. Everington with firmness, "I've no doubt that you have twisted me around your little finger lots of times, but you are not going to do it this time. I have made up my mind to help that boy."

Mrs. Everington saw that she had taken a wrong tack. "You never seem to realize that when I dis-

agree with you I am thinking only of your own good," she said. "What will the men at your club say, what will our friends think, when they learn that Meredith Everington has turned missionary and begun to run after ragamuffins and street arabs?"

"Elise," said the lawyer after a pregnant pause, "that will do. I am going to look after this child." Mrs. Everington saw that she had made a mistake and interrupted. Her husband silenced her with a gesture. "And when I bring that lad into this house, you will treat him politely."

The die was cast. Mrs. Everington, by her very opposition, had driven her husband to a position that five minutes earlier he had not dreamed of holding. He had decided to compromise with conscience by hiring Joe as a caddie. But he had not intended to go farther. And to bring the child into his own home was the very last thing he would have thought of doing. But nothing in the world was so powerful a spur to Meredith Everington as opposition. Success had created the habit, the craving, for success. The minute Meredith Everington found he could not get a thing, that minute he wanted it.

Despite his overbearing attitude Mr. Everington was very fond of his wife, and this fondness was reciprocated. Now, as he lighted his cigar, before going to his office, Mr. Everington said gently, "I hope I didn't

hurt your feelings, Elise. I didn't mean to, but I feel strongly about this matter."

Mrs. Everington was ever as steel to his flint, but never could she withstand gentleness. Instead of making a sharp retort, she smilingly dismissed the matter. "Whenever are you going to stop smoking?" she asked by way of changing the subject. Then both laughed for the question was an old one between them.

During the forenoon Mr. Everington telephoned to Judge Wilmot that he would become Joe's Big Brother.

"What shall I have to do?" he asked. "You know about such things. What would you advise me to do first?"

"You'll have to get acquainted with the lad first. Come to my court this afternoon and I'll have Joe here. You must first of all get his confidence. Farther than that I can hardly tell you, except to say that only as a last resort do we wish to have money given to children. It is so likely to give them an impulse toward beggary. But you can see that he finds enough to do to keep him fed and out of mischief, and you can inspire him to try for something better in life. Take him to an entertainment occasionally, or to a good show. Let him see how people ought to live. Take him to your own home once in a while."

At that the man at the other end of the wire winced, but the reply came back firmly, "I will, Judge."

"Before I ring off," concluded His Honor, "let me thank you for coming to this decision. I felt sure you would. You'll never regret it. It will mean as much to you before long as it does to Joe. I shall expect you at four. Good-bye."

And so it came about that Meredith Everington became, at least officially, Big Brother to little Joe. But becoming a big brother in reality, as well as in name, Mr. Everington found to be quite another matter. It takes two to make a bargain. And Joe was anything but a Barkis. He was not "willin'."

For when Judge Wilmot, in the privacy of his chambers, informed Joe that Mr. Everington was to be his Big Brother, Joe's countenance darkened.

"What d'ye mean by a Big Brother?" he asked suspiciously.

"Why, a man who will take an interest in you, and sort of look after you—just as you look after your crippled brother," explained the Judge.

"Do youse mean de guy wat sat on de bench wit' you when de cop brought me here last week?" demanded Joe.

"Yes, Joe," said the Judge. "That gentleman was Mr. Meredith Everington, a very celebrated lawyer, and a very wealthy man. He felt so sorry for you that he wants to help you along."

"Nix," replied Joe. "He laughed when I told you

about me mudder, Judge. He don't care nuttin' about me." And then, after a pause, "Say, Judge, wat's his game, anyway? What's he after?"

In vain did the Judge try to shake Joe's conviction that the lawyer had some ulterior motive in befriending him. Joe's hard experience of the world told him that self-interest is the ruling passion of the universe. Had the Judge told Joe that Mr. Everington, by befriending Joe, hoped for some good to himself, Joe could have understood the situation readily enough. But he had watched the cold, hard, unsympathetic face of the lawyer, studying it as he studied the Judge's, the while he poured out his tale of his mother; and he had seen there, not merely a lack of pity, but an expression little different from a sneer. With the instinct of childhood he felt that there was no kindness in the man.

That people should pity him Joe neither asked nor desired. But that any one should be indifferent to the sufferings of his mother seemed incredible to Joe. It filled him with fierce resentment. And he stamped the guilty one as a person beyond the pale.

Of Mr. Everington's change of heart, Joe of course knew nothing. Conversion was as yet a word unknown to Joe. So it was natural enough that he should regard his newly found Big Brother not merely with disfavor, but with positive suspicion.

"I don't want nuttin' to do with him, Judge," he told His Honour. And when Judge Wilmot assured Joe that Mr. Everington's intentions were of the kindest and that the lawyer had told him of his wish to help, Joe exclaimed, "He ain't on de level wit' you, Judge. Youse want to look out for him. He's after something."

His Honor was in a quandary. Whatever would Mr. Everington do, after he had been so hard to persuade, if Joe treated him rudely?

"Joe," said the Judge, "you believe *I* am your friend, don't you?"

"Sure," replied Joe. "You treated me white and you didn't laugh at me mudder."

"And you know that I am trying to help you, Joe, don't you?"

"Sure," said Joe.

"Then listen to me, Joe. Mr. Everington is going to help you because I asked him to. If you are rude to him, you will hurt me, because he is my friend. I want you to be polite to him—for my sake. Will you?"

"Sure," said Joe. "But I don't want him for a big brother."

"Well, Joe, you see I've asked him to be your big brother. Now I can't tell him I don't want him, can I? You try him for a month, and if at the end of that

time you don't like him, we'll end the arrangement." Joe agreed dubiously. "And remember this, Joe," concluded His Honor, "Mr. Everington can help you get a good job just as soon as you get your working papers. He can do a great deal more for you than I can."

So it came about that when Meredith Everington was made acquainted with Joe, the latter treated him with a mixture of politeness and disdain that puzzled the lawyer sorely. Instead of the frank, ingenuous little lad he had seen in the court-room, Mr. Everington found he was dealing with a sharp, suspicious, watchful, though diminutive, man of the world. Joe was polite enough—after his own crude fashion. In fact his politeness, like armor of triple bronze, was his shield from intrigue and device. He kept the lawyer, figuratively speaking, at arm's length with icy reserve. Nowhere was there an opening in his armor of cold reticence. The plan Mr. Everington had formed in his own mind for winning Joe's confidence went a-glimmering. For the lawyer had counted on dealing with a wistful little boy, whereas he found himself fencing with a sophisticated little man of the world. So he got nowhere.

His Honor had decided that the best disposition of Joe's case would be to put the lad in school, if possible, and let him sell papers after school hours. He had de-

cided, moreover, after his investigator had reported as to conditions aboard the *Mattie Ford*, that for a time at least he would not send Joe back to the coal barge, but let him live at the Lurie. Conditions were wholesome there, and he believed that a lad with Joe's spirit would come out best if allowed his freedom, though the Judge meant, of course, to have that freedom closely supervised. Paid officials could do that, but the work of inspiring, encouraging, assisting Joe must be done by some one else. In the Judge's plan for Joe Mr. Everington played a big part. He had promised that the Big Brother arrangement should end in a month if not agreeable only because he believed that long before that time Mr. Everington would win the boy's confidence and gain his love.

Even so his plan well-nigh miscarried. His Honor obtained from the Board of Education permission to send Joe to a part-time school near his accustomed haunts. Mr. Everington went with Joe one morning to this school, called upon principal and teacher, and explained Joe's case in detail, bespeaking for the lad the utmost consideration. He went to the Lurie, where little was known of Joe except that he was a newsboy, and set forth the lad's case to the superintendent.

"We're going to try to let him support himself if he can do it," said Mr. Everington, "but we don't want him to sleep in hallways or on roofs any more. If he

does not earn enough to pay for his board, I will be responsible for it. So keep his bed for him. And, by the way, you had better tell him that he is to come here every night, whether he has the price or not. Tell him if he does not have the money he can pay later. If he can't earn it, I will make it good."

And with Joe he went to the Board of Health and obtained the precious permit to sell papers. By this time Mr. Everington was beginning to feel a real interest in Joe. In fact his interest was so keen that when it occurred to him that he had spent an entire half day on these errands, he merely smiled.

Despite all these kindnesses, and the frequency with which he had seen Joe, his plans had well-nigh been wrecked, had it not been for a happy accident that put him on better terms with Joe. For so far the lad had maintained his attitude of distant politeness that rendered anything like intimacy an absolute impossibility. At first this attitude offended Mr. Everington greatly. It angered him to think that this child of the gutter should not instantly bow to the will of the great Meredith Everington. Then, as the resistance continued, it piqued him. True to his nature, he determined to force the lad to like him. And finally, as he saw more of Joe and discovered what a really lovable lad he was, he grew fond of him. And now his desire to win Joe's confidence was based purely upon his affection for the

lad. But throughout it all, Joe was determinedly distant. In the background of his memory was the sneer at his mother.

So it went until one afternoon, moved by thoughts of Joe, Mr. Everington dismissed his chauffeur and walked up-town. But instead of going straight home, he bent his footsteps toward the great ferry where he knew Joe would be plying his trade.

As he approached the plaza, Mr. Everington glanced up Eleventh Avenue, his attention attracted by the sound of shrill voices and a knot of small boys. He walked toward the group, but stopped a few feet away to see what was passing. None of the group paid any attention to him. From the centre of the ring of boys a high, frightened voice was begging some one for protection.

"Don't let him hit me," shrilled the voice pleadingly.

"I won't," came the answer. "I'll knock his block off." And the same voice went on angrily, "You big stiff, what do youse mean by hittin' a cripple? You're a big bully, you are, and if you touch him again I'll bust youse in de slats."

The voice sounded familiar to Mr. Everington. He moved toward the circle to see who were quarreling. As he did so there was a scuffling sound, the encircling line swayed back, and Mr. Everington saw within the figure of little Joe, standing over his prostrate crippled

brother and fighting like a fury with a boy half a head taller than himself. Mr. Everington comprehended the situation at a glance. Joe was defending his brother from persecution. And inasmuch as Joe was having altogether the better of the scrap, Mr. Everington resolved to let them fight it out.

But before the battle had raged two minutes, a cry went up from some vigilant-eyed young spectator. "Cheese it! De cop!" As though by magic the group melted away. Before Mr. Everington could even call out, Joe and his late antagonist were racing up the street, side by side, their fierce hatred forgotten in the fear of that common enemy, "de cop." As the principals in the affray, they knew that they would be the sufferers if apprehended. The bluecoat had approached unseen near enough to detect the culprits; and he rushed up the avenue after Joe and his fellow fugitive. The inevitable happened. The larger boy outran Joe, and soon the latter was in the hands of the law.

Mr. Everington followed the chase briskly, and he came up while Joe was still writhing in the first grip of his captor. Joe could hardly have been more astonished had an angel from heaven appeared.

"Won't you make him let me go?" pleaded Joe. "I ain't done nuttin'. Honest I ain't. I was only fightin' for me brudder wat's crippled."

"He speaks the truth, officer," said Mr. Everington.

"This lad is not to blame for the disturbance. If anybody is, I am. They were fighting when I came up, and I suppose I should have stopped the fight, but as he was fighting with a bully, I didn't. Let him go, officer. I assure you he is not to blame."

"And who are you, to be tellin' me what to do?" inquired the policeman with sharp sarcasm. "You'd better be about your business before I run you in, too."

Meredith Everington was not accustomed to be spoken to thus. His eyes shot sparks as he replied, "It is my business to see that this boy gets a square deal. I tell you he is not at fault, and I advise you to let him go."

He stepped toward Joe. The policeman misconstrued the act. All the stubbornness within him was aroused.

"Hands off, there," he roared. "You lay a finger on that boy and I'll arrest you for interfering with an officer. In fact I'll do it anyway." And he grabbed the lawyer by the shoulder.

For one second it looked as though Mr. Everington were about to strike. And if the tall, lean, powerful lawyer had done so, it might have gone hard with the policeman. But he restrained himself.

"Take your hand off of me," he ordered. "I'll go to the station-house with you without making any trouble."

The policeman let his hand fall from the lawyer's shoulder. But perhaps the cold, steely eyes before him had quite as much to do with it as any sudden accession of sense.

At the station-house the policeman arraigned his two prisoners before the desk.

"I arrested the kid for fightin' on the street and the big fellow for interfering with me in the performance of my duty," said the policeman.

The lieutenant at the desk surveyed Joe and his fellow prisoner. He comprehended the situation in an instant. Many such cases had come before him in his twenty years of service.

"Well, well!" he said. "How much did he interfere with you, officer?" Evidently he knew the nature of hot-headed young policemen.

"He tried to make me let the prisoner go," replied the policeman. "Said the boy wasn't at fault and the like."

"Did you learn whether he was at fault before you brought him here?" demanded the lieutenant. And without waiting for a reply, the man behind the desk turned to Mr. Everington. "What is your name, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Everington drew forth a card and handed it to the lieutenant. The effect was remarkable.

"Please tell me what you know about this case, Mr. Everington," he said with marked deference.

The lawyer briefly told what had happened.

"You are discharged with an apology, sir," said the lieutenant, "and the lad with you. Do you wish to make any charge against this policeman?"

The policeman was thunderstruck. "No," said Mr. Everington. "I am obliged to you, lieutenant. Good-day," and taking Joe by the hand, he walked out.

No sooner had the door closed than the lieutenant burst out in a rage at the offending policeman, "Look at that card, you fool! That man's one of the most powerful lawyers in New York. He could have you or me broke in a minute. Next time you go to arresting respectable citizens you'd better do a little thinking first—if there's any brains in that block on your shoulders."

As for Joe, he could not find words to express his gratitude. He had not heard the lieutenant's scathing rebuke to the policeman. He did not comprehend the efficacy of the bit of pasteboard Mr. Everington had shoved across the desk. But he did understand that his Big Brother had risked arrest to help him. He walked on in silence for a time.

"Mr. Everington?" he finally piped faintly.

"Well, Joe, what is it?"

"I ain't treated you white," said Joe.

"What do you mean, Joe?"

"Why, you got me de permit and de place in school,

and now you gets arrested for me, an'—an'—I done you dirt."

"I don't understand, Joe."

"You was me big brudder," replied Joe, "but I didn't treat you like one, and I wants you to—to ——"

"To what, Joe?"

"To fergit it," said Joe, and the tears began to well up in his eyes.

"You mean that you want to let bygones be bygones?" asked the lawyer.

"Dat's it," answered Joe. "I didn't tink you meant it. But now I know you *is* me big brudder. Shake."

Thus was the bond of friendship cemented between little Joe and his friend the great lawyer.

CHAPTER XII

MR. EVERINGTON MEETS JOE'S FAMILY

HAD Joe presented the same unsightly appearance that he did the day Mr. Everington first saw him, it is doubtful if the lawyer, even with all the kindly interest he now felt in the lad, would long have been seen on the streets with him this afternoon. But Joe was now a very different little boy—at least in appearance; Judge Wilmot knew that it would never do to let Joe begin school in the outlandish garments he was wearing when arrested, lest the children make sport of him and Joe find himself again in trouble through a natural resentment of their persecution. Upon His Honor's suggestion, therefore, Mr. Everington himself had supplied the clothes that Joe now wore—a warm, good-looking suit of brown wool, thick stockings, and stout, new shoes, with clean underclothes, shirt, and cap to boot. The cost was to Mr. Everington a mere bagatelle, but to Joe it was a gift of the gods. And as even this proof of interest had not moved Joe from his determined aloofness toward his Big Brother, the strength of his moral fibre can be the better appreciated. He was beyond purchase. Now

he looked as bright and attractive as a lad could be, and Mr. Everington not only was not ashamed to walk beside him, but he could not help feeling deep in his heart a wish that he had as attractive a lad of his own—for the Everington family consisted of but two souls.

Hand in hand Big Brother and little retraced their steps to the scene of the recent disturbance, but Henry was nowhere in sight. Like every other child of the streets, his heart was filled with an insensate fear of “de cops,” and he had scuttled away on his crutches like a great crab, to hide until the storm blew over. For ten minutes they searched for him, but Henry was to be found at none of his accustomed haunts.

Mr. Everington was not sorry. He now had the opportunity he had been waiting for—a chance to go with Joe to visit the *Mattie Ford*. Mr. Everington, of course, had no idea of taking Charles Hawkins’ entire family under his wing. He felt little interest in them, but he had grown very curious about their manner of existence. He wanted to see how people lived on a coal barge. In a cold way he felt sympathy for them. But that sympathy was as yet purely theoretic. It had not been quickened into life by actual contact, by ocular proof of their miseries. Ever since he took Joe in hand he had been wanting to see what a coal barge was like—to visit the *Mattie Ford*. But Mr. Everington had been waiting to make that visit until he should

have gained Joe's confidence. He knew not how he would be received, and he was still too little at home with people of Joe's class to feel sure of a kind reception. But he knew that if Joe were his partisan, Joe's mother would welcome him. So he had wisely bided his time.

Joe, of course, had already informed his mother of his altered fortunes, though he had done little more than mention his Big Brother. He could not tell his mother about him without revealing the fact of his dislike for the man, and eventually the reason for his dislike. Joe knew that this would come out, and he was so sure it would hurt his mother, that he avoided the danger by ignoring Mr. Everington and crediting all his benefactions to the good Judge.

Now that Mr. Everington had Joe's confidence, he felt that the time had come to see the mother. He knew that this was the psychological moment, while Joe was still so full of gratitude and contrition. So he merely said to Joe, when Henry was not to be found, "We'll go down to the *Mattie Ford* and see your mother." And Joe gladly acquiesced.

As they turned south along the water-front the lawyer experienced a new sensation. A positive thrill of pleasurable excitement shot through him. All his life he had been too busy peering within the covers of books to get acquainted with people—at least with

people outside of his own exclusive set. He had learned marvelous things in the past fortnight. Indistinctly he was beginning to understand that there were more things in heaven and earth than he had dreamed of in his narrow philosophy. He had made the discovery, so startling to all those of a superior breed, that the men and women who do the world's work are human beings, just like themselves. He was beginning to like these hitherto unknown creatures, these coarse and grimy sons of toil, these sweating, blackened workers. For underneath their displeasing exterior was a genuineness and simplicity that was not to be found under the veneer of Mr. Everington's highly polished associates. For Meredith Everington was at heart too much of a man not to respond to the touch of genuineness. However much his success had warped him, that success, like all real success, had had its foundation in genuine manhood.

Fortune was with them. Hawkins was absent—doubtless at Mr. Kelley's—and mother and daughter were alone on the *Mattie Ford*. For some moments before boarding that craft, Mr. Everington gazed about him. He saw the high, blank walls of the pier sheds to right and left, the unsightly coal shed to landward, with only the opening toward the river where one might look out. The foul odor of the dump assailed his nostrils. His ears were assaulted by the shrieking

of the hoisting engine and the never ending rattle of coal, the incessant tooting of whistles, and the roar of the water-front traffic.

"God! what a place to live," he muttered to himself. Then he and Joe entered the cabin.

Little Joe made the introductions. "Dis is me big brudder," he said, "an' dis is me mudder an' me sister Helen."

Mrs. Hawkins was dumbfounded. She looked at Joe in complete perplexity. She had never heard of the Big Brothers. The lawyer came to the rescue.

"Let me explain, Mrs. Hawkins," he said, shaking her hand so cordially that at once she began to feel at home with him. "My name is Everington. I was in court when Joe was arrested for selling papers without a permit. Joe told us all about his home and his—his—about Mr. Hawkins—and as the Judge thought some one ought to look after Joe a little, he asked me to do it. Joe means that I am keeping my eye on him a bit. Isn't that it, Joe?"

"But I do not understand what you mean by a Big Brother, Joe," said Mrs. Hawkins.

"That is only a name, Mrs. Hawkins," explained the lawyer. "You know some of us who—who have a little time to spare—want to—to help some of these less fortunate boys along, and so we—we sort of look after them as though they were our little brothers.

That's why they call us Big Brothers." Mr. Everington was having almost as hard a time to explain this new thing in his life as Mrs. Hawkins was to understand it.

"Sure, he's me big brudder," spoke up Joe. "He gets pinched hisself tryin' to save me from de cops, and he gets me de permit to sell papers, and he gets me de place in school, and he buys me de clothes, and ——"

Mrs. Hawkins, who had supposed that all these things came from the Judge, was dumb with amazement. Instinctively the lawyer grasped the situation.

"Hold on there, Joe," he interrupted. "You owe those things to the good Judge. I may have gotten them for you, but I am only his agent."

A light broke over Mrs. Hawkins' face. "Oh!" she said, "you're another of them probation officers."

"Well, not exactly," rejoined the lawyer, flushing in spite of himself, "but we'll let it rest there if you like. I am not connected with the court, but the Judge asked me to look after Joe a little, so it's almost the same thing after all."

Now followed a long talk that put them all on an excellent footing. The unsightly surroundings, the wretched little cabin, the scanty garments, the pinched faces of these river dwellers went straight to Mr. Everington's heart. He was sympathy itself. He ex-

erted those great powers, by which at will he held able men spellbound, to put at ease these humble dwellers on a coal barge. Tactfully and kindly he drew from the mother the story of her life, of the happier days that had been, of the trying times that followed Mr. Wainright's death, of the evils that had befallen them through her weakness in marrying Hawkins, for the good woman spared herself not at all, and of the new hope that had come to them of something better when Joe should be old enough to make a home for them.

What a pitifully slender hope it was, a hope whose fruition rested solely and alone upon the success of a small boy of twelve years, who was fighting against terrific odds, who was daily growing toward a period of ever greater temptation, whose very surroundings, whose every associate, tended to drag him down into the mire—a little lad of twelve years who had a hundred acquaintances to pull him down and not one to lift him up—not one save his Big Brother.

As the great lawyer comprehended it all—the life of misery, the fear and hunger and want, the dread of the future, made endurable solely by this slender thread of hope, his heart was touched as nothing in all his life had touched it, and he resolved with a decision that was almost fierce that Joe should not fail them. Then and there Meredith Everington pledged himself to the fulfillment of the task Judge Wilmot had put upon him.

His practical mind at once turned to means of relief for these sufferers. Instinctively his hand went to his pocket. That was the easiest way. But Judge Wilmot had warned him of its dangers. "Whatever you do," the Judge had said to him, "beware of pauperizing those whom you try to assist. Keep alive the spark of self-respect. That is the only way you can really help." This time he must give of himself, not of his money. He could not salve his conscience by dropping a greenback in the collection basket. Nor, be it said to his credit, did Mr. Everington this time desire to do so. He saw at once that Mrs. Hawkins, in her weak, sickly condition, could do nothing. During the months since Joe had run away, she had more than held her own, but she was still pale and weak, and still her body was wracked by coughing spells. Clearly she should be in a hospital, and Mr. Everington decided to bring that about at once. The sole obstacle in the way was the possible refusal of Hawkins to give his consent.

Then there was Helen. She was now more than fifteen years old, practically full-grown, strong, vigorous, self-reliant, and not only willing but eager to work. Moreover, as Mr. Everington soon discovered, she was an amazingly good needlewoman, having a natural gift in the planning and making of articles with thread and needle. Here was clearly an asset

that was available the instant Mrs. Hawkins could go to a hospital—for Helen did not like to leave her sickly mother unprotected in this rough neighborhood, and alone with her drunken father.

Before going home, Mr. Everington determined to get acquainted with Hawkins. He told Joe to stay with his mother and sister while he slipped across the "farm" to Kelley's. There he found Hawkins—at least he found a man so closely answering to Joe's description that he was sure it was Hawkins. Mr. Everington ordered a glass of beer and sat down at a table near the stranger, to sip it. Presently he engaged the man in conversation, and Hawkins—for it was he—scenting a free drink from the well-dressed visitor, made himself agreeable.

From a discussion of the weather, Mr. Everington turned the talk into other channels.

"Mostly sea-folk and men who work on the ships hang out here, I suppose," he said, adopting the vernacular of the region.

"Yep, all seafarin' men," answered Hawkins.

"You look as though you might be an old sea-dog yourself," said the lawyer heartily.

Hawkins swelled with pride. "I used to be," he said. "When I was young I sailed on the best ships that left this port. Them was the days. But there ain't no sailin' ships left no more, to speak of. The

steamships has put 'em out of business, and there ain't nothin' left for an old sea-dog like myself but to take care of some old hulk of a coal boat. It's a rum way of livin', Cap'n."

Hawkins' tale was not wholly fiction. As a young man he had sailed on the last of the big sailing craft that plied regularly between New York and certain coast ports. But it was not steam but John Barley-corn that had put him out of the running. Mr. Everington saw it all. In this little flash of pride, Hawkins had told far more than he had meant to reveal. As a sailor he had been able enough, and at heart he was still far from being a bad man, but drink had so broken his resolution, so weakened his moral fibre, so dulled and besotted his brain, that now he was of more harm than good in the world.

"He's past hope," was Mr. Everington's mental appraisal of the wreck that had been Charles Hawkins. "He could never cut loose from booze."

Mr. Everington bought him a cigar—a good one, too—with the result that the barge captain stuck to his heels, like a stray dog following one who has caressed it, so that the lawyer was put to it to get free from him in order to return to the *Mattie Ford*. He had had to listen to a lot of maudlin chatter, but the result was worth it. He had Hawkins' good-will.

CHAPTER XIII

BIG BROTHER AND GOOD SAMARITAN BOTH

IT was characteristic of Mr. Everington that he did not quarrel with fate when he found himself saddled with the burden of caring for the entire Hawkins family. He did make a grimace as he realized how deeply enmeshed he was becoming; but somehow he could not feel angry about it. His mind told him he was a fool, but the glad feeling in his heart, growing daily, outweighed that troublesome conviction. Somehow he couldn't help feeling, though in a vague uncertain way, that this present task was worth more to him and the world than half the cases he had argued. Having put his hand to the plough, he was not the man to turn back. That was not Meredith Everington's manner of life.

The very next morning he telephoned to the Commissioner of Charities, whom he knew well.

"There's a poor woman with the consumption, living on a coal barge at the foot of Barrow Street," he said, "whom I should like to send to a hospital for outpatient treatment for a time."

"Very well, Mr. Everington," replied the Com-

missioner; "suppose you send her to the House of Relief—you probably know it as the Hudson Street Hospital—and they will take care of her very nicely."

"That's exactly what I want done. But I want to make certain it is done."

"You may be sure they'll take care of her."

"I am sure that a word from you will make that certain."

"Oh! that isn't necessary at all, Mr. Everington."

"Perhaps not, Commissioner, but I have a particular interest in this woman, and I'm going to ask you to send me a letter of introduction for her to your hospital superintendent. Her name is Mrs. Charles Hawkins. Please impress it upon him that this woman must have the best care the institution can give her. And let me have the letter at once." Thus Mr. Everington, as was his wont, gained his end.

"And by the way," he added, as he was about to hang up the receiver, "I shall soon want to place this woman in the best hospital you have at your disposal for tubercular patients."

"That will be the Seton Hospital at Inwood," was the reply.

"Then please bear this in mind, Commissioner, and let me know when you have a vacant bed there."

Thus it was arranged, and thus was guaranteed to Mrs. Hawkins what many another of the city's poor

might have begged for in vain. Thus potent was the name of Everington.

No sooner had he disposed of this matter than Mr. Everington got into communication with an intimate acquaintance of his who was president of a corporation that manufactured women's clothing.

"Fred," said Mr. Everington over the wire, "have you got a job for a girl of fifteen?"

"Sorry, Meredith," was the reply, "but we have all the hands we can use. Business is dull now, and I'm trying to find some way to keep all my hands busy. I don't like to discharge them if I can help it."

"That's too bad," said Mr. Everington. "I ran across a girl yesterday that is a wonder with a needle. She can make anything—take a torn handkerchief and turn it into a handsome gown, and so on. You know the kind—born with a needle in her fingers."

"Well, if she's got brains, maybe I can use her. We've always got room for people with brains. Send her over to me. I'll see what she can do."

"Well, she can't go to work just yet," said Mr. Everington, "because she has to take care of her sick mother. But I'm going to send the mother to a hospital shortly, and then I'll send her over to you."

"Say, isn't this something new for you, Meredith? When did you go in for charity?"

"Never mind, Fred," was the reply. "Judge Wil-

not asked me to look after a kid. This is the sister—most interesting case you ever heard of—tell you about it some time. Good-bye.”

When the Charity Commissioner's letter came, it was duly forwarded to Mrs. Hawkins; but to insure prompt and certain delivery, Mr. Everington sent it by a messenger boy. The note from Mr. Everington that accompanied it was of the briefest sort, yet Mrs. Hawkins sat down and cried when she read it. Brutality she had learned to endure. Kindness was more than she could stand.

For Mr. Everington had now made possible for her a thing she had long desired—treatment at a hospital. To be sure he had not opened for her a path hitherto closed, for the city's charities are always open; but he had smoothed a road that she had feared might be rough. Too well, alas! she had learned of the thorns in the path of the poor, of the sneers and gibes, the cruel taunts, the harsh treatment, the contemptuous attitude toward the poor, of those whom the city pays to care for them. Sensitive and fine in her nature, Mrs. Hawkins had so dreaded a repetition in the hospitals of some of the slights that had been put upon her elsewhere that she had held back from seeking the help she so sorely needed and desired. Now she need have no fear. And though she did not fully realize the potency of the letter in her hand, she knew enough to

know that a letter from the Commissioner of Charities would secure for her not only prompt treatment, but what she craved even more, courtesy.

"God bless him!" she murmured, and fell to crying again.

And so Helen found her, when she returned shortly to the *Mattie Ford* from her marketing. Together the two went at once to the hospital, where Mrs. Hawkins' reception was even more than she had hoped for. Day after day she returned, and always she was accorded the utmost consideration. Very slowly she began to mend. And it would not be surprising if the courtesy quite as much as the pills were the cause of it.

One day Hawkins came into the cabin while mother and daughter were at the hospital. They had not told him of the treatment. He wanted some coffee made, and was furious at their absence. For a time he sat by the stove, cursing. Then he went above and paced up and down the narrow strip of deck. From there he climbed to the wharf, and was just making his way across the "farm" back to Kelley's again, when he caught sight of his missing wife and daughter. He shuffled down the water-front to meet them.

"Where you been?" he roared with a terrible oath. Mrs. Hawkins began to tremble visibly.

"We've been to the hospital," spoke up Helen.

"Mother has been getting some medicine for her cough."

"And who told you that you could go to the hospital?" demanded Hawkins, again cursing his cowering wife. There was no reply. "So that's what you do with the money I give you, is it?" shouted Hawkins. "You spend it for good-for-nothing medicines. Damn you, you won't spend any more for drugs. If I ever ketch you going to the hospital again, I'll give you something you'll remember." And he fell to cursing again furiously.

Helen protested that the medicines had cost nothing.

An evil leer came into Hawkins' eyes. "I suppose that's because you was along." He called her a vile name, then said, "So that's where you spend your time, is it? With them hospital doctors."

Impotent in her own defense, Mrs. Hawkins was stung to fury by this aspersion on her daughter. She turned fiercely on Hawkins—the first time she had ever faced him—and flung back the taunts, taxing him with his debauchery and his cruelty. She was a lioness at bay. Her offspring had been attacked. She forgot the curious crowd that gathered, forgot the staring faces, the loud comments—and flung Hawkins' conduct into his teeth. She made such a pitiful picture, with her wan face and poor garments, defending her beautiful daughter, who stood beside her with cheeks aflame

and eyes downcast, that the ready sympathy of the crowd was excited.

“De bloke ought to have his block knocked off,” sang out a wharf-rat, and in an instant there was a rush for Hawkins. Men were pommeling him from all sides, when a policeman ran up. Hawkins’ assailants fled in every direction, but stopped when out of reach of the law to hurl back epithets and threats of what further they would do to Hawkins did opportunity but present. Hawkins was led to the *Mattie Ford* by a policeman. Fright had sobered him completely. He was as terrified as a rat that has just escaped from a terrier. His coffee he took in absolute silence. He never again made mention of the hospital; but Mrs. Hawkins, mortified, chagrined, humiliated beyond description by what had happened, ceased her visits to the dispensary. She feared a repetition of the scene, or something worse.

CHAPTER XIV

HAWKINS

THOUGH Hawkins' brutality put an end to his wife's visits to the dispensary, it indirectly hastened her removal to the hospital at Inwood. And constant regular care was the thing she most needed.

Within a few days after the set-to on the waterfront, Joe appeared at the coal dock and heard from Helen the full story of their stepfather's attack. Helen cried as she told Joe about it. Joe's fists clinched in anger. A month previous he would not have known what to do. He would have been impotent. Now he went at once to Mr. Everington's office—a thing that otherwise he had not dared—and demanded to see his Big Brother.

Ordinarily Joe would have been awed by the magnificence of the place, by the marble hallways, the swift, silent elevators, the elegantly appointed office rooms with their thick, soft rugs, and costly furnishings. Ordinarily he would have felt entirely abashed by the haughty office boy who inquired his name and business. But Joe was now too wrought up, too much on fire with the thought of his mother's wrongs to pay

any heed to his surroundings. And when the guardian of the gate told him superciliously that he could not see Mr. Everington who was busy with an important case, Joe turned on him fiercely and demanded that his name be taken in to the lawyer. So impressed was the office boy that he did as ordered, and Mr. Everington sent out word that he would see Joe at once. He rightly divined that something of importance must have happened to bring Joe to his office.

The door had scarcely closed behind Joe when that excited lad burst into a torrent of words.

“He won’t let me mudder go to de hospital no more, an’ he tells me sister he’ll beat her and me mudder both if dey don’t stay home. He calls me sister a bad name and he’s going to give her a lickin’ right on de street when de crowd hands it to him good, an’ a cop saves him from a beatin’, an’ now me mudder ain’t got no more medicine, an’ I wants you to come right away an’ give me fadder hell ——”

“Hold on there, Joe,” said Mr. Everington, as soon as he could get a word in. “Now, just take your time. What is the trouble?”

As calmly as he could, Joe related what had occurred. Though Mr. Everington had to quiet him repeatedly, so excited did Joe become as he lived over, in his recital, his mother’s wrongs. At best it was a disconnected story. But Mr. Everington pieced the dis-

connected statements together until he had a very accurate idea of what had occurred.

"Your mother is in no present danger, is she, Joe?" was his first question, after he had the story complete.

"No," said Joe. "De crowd scared him stiff. Helen says he ain't hardly said a word to 'em since. But me mudder's medicine is all gone an' she's afraid to get any more."

"I see," said the lawyer, meditating on the case. "Apparently there is only one thing to do—send her to a hospital to stay."

"But me fadder won't let her go," said Joe.

"That's what I'm afraid of," said Mr. Everington. "I don't want to do anything irregular, but—well, your mother has got to go to a hospital at once, Joe." He turned to his telephone. "Give me the Commissioner of Charities," he said to the operator; and in another moment he was talking to that gentleman.

"Things have gone bad with that woman on the coal barge that I told you about recently," he said, "the woman with tuberculosis that you are going to take care of at Inwood. Is there accommodation for her there now?"

"I'm afraid we can't help you out to-day, Mr. Everington," came the reply. "We haven't an empty bed in the hospital."

"Can't you put an extra cot—just an ordinary cot—in one of the wards, Commissioner? Anything that's fit to sleep on will do. It's very important that this woman be taken care of at once. And it will be the biggest favor you could do me."

From a man of Everington's standing, such a request was equivalent to an order. "I'll do what I can," came the answer. "We'll put up a cot, and though that may not be as comfortable as a bed, the treatment will be as good as anybody gets."

"I am obliged to you, Commissioner. Will you please ask your superintendent to see that this woman has the best of care and to send his ambulance to the foot of Barrow Street at ——" Mr. Everington paused and turned to Joe. "When does policeman Sullivan go off duty?" he asked.

"Six o'clock," said Joe.

"And send your ambulance at half-past five," he said, turning back to the telephone.

Joe had listened breathlessly to the one-sided conversation. "How are you goin' to get her away?" he asked.

"I don't know yet, Joe," said the lawyer. "But have no fear. We'll get her to the hospital. Now you go back to your work, but meet me at the *Mattie Ford's* dock at five o'clock. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Joe, starting for the door. And

then, before the lawyer understood what he was doing, the impulsive lad turned back, flung his arms about the lawyer's great shoulders and kissed him.

At five o'clock Mr. Everington met Joe at the wharf. As they went into the cabin of the coal barge, a warm light of welcome came into Mrs. Hawkins' face. She wrung her visitor's hand in a way that made his eyes go misty.

"The Commissioner of—the hospital head telephoned me this afternoon that he would send for you at half-past five to take you to the hospital at Inwood," said Mr. Everington.

"Oh! sir, you are so good," began Mrs. Hawkins, impulsively. Then a look of despair came on her face. "I cannot go," she said.

"Cannot go? Why not?" asked Mr. Everington, affecting to look surprised.

"I'm sorry, sir, but my husband, Mr. Hawkins, won't let me go."

"We'll see about that," said Mr. Everington reassuringly. "You get yourself ready. I'll go speak to him. I suppose he's at—across the street."

Mrs. Hawkins nodded. Mr. Everington rose and left the cabin, while Joe kissed his mother and fell to talking with Helen.

"He's so kind," Joe heard his mother say to herself, but he did not tell her that he himself had been the

cause of Mr. Everington's visit. He was afraid she might refuse to go to the hospital.

Before Mr. Everington went to the saloon across the way, he hunted up Sullivan, told him plainly who he was, and what was his errand. "I think I can manage him myself," said the lawyer, "but if I can't, will you help?"

"Leave the old scoundrel to me," replied Sullivan. "I'll fix him. We'll put the woman in the hospital or my name ain't Denny Sullivan."

But his help proved to be unnecessary. Mr. Everington found Hawkins, and with characteristic directness went straight to the point.

"Your wife is going to the hospital," he said. "The ambulance is coming for her at five-thirty."

Hawkins stared at him for a moment with speechless amazement. Then anger came into his face. "What the devil have you got to do with my wife?" he roared.

Before he could say more, Mr. Everington spoke up, studying the man's face carefully the while. "Judge Wilmot has asked me to look after your family," he said. "That's what I have to do with it." And seeing anger still mounting in Hawkins' face, he added, "And policeman Sullivan has been ordered to give me any assistance necessary."

The angry look on Hawkins' face changed to one of

sullenness. Judge Wilmot and his probation officers—for such he now supposed the lawyer to be—Hawkins held in contempt. He had already been questioned by these pseudo-policemen. But Sullivan was quite another factor. Hawkins did not want another session on the dark pier with that husky arm of the law. The lawyer had judged rightly. His bluff had worked.

“Is there anything that you want to say to your wife before she goes?” he asked.

“No,” answered Hawkins, sullenly. “Let her go and be damned to her.”

In the distance a gong could be heard clanging, the ringing sound growing louder and louder. It was the ambulance. Mr. Everington hurried over to the coal barge. The ambulance was there almost as soon as he. Immediately the inevitable crowd collected. Then came Sullivan. His orders made it imperative for him to inquire into all ambulance cases. But he had started to investigate this ambulance case before ever the clang of the gong was audible.

“It’s all right,” said Mr. Everington, hastening into the cabin. “Mr. Hawkins consents to your going. Be quick, please.”

Mrs. Hawkins was already bundled up in the only outer wrap she possessed. She was hustled into the waiting ambulance, the gong clattered sharply, the crowd parted, and away went the conveyance. It was

all done so quickly that even if Hawkins had wanted to bring in person the message he had sent by Mr. Everington, he would scarce have had the time to shuffle across the wide water-front. But Hawkins did not wish to run foul of Sullivan. Instead of crossing the water-front, he sat staring into his glass of beer, gulping down schooner after schooner until the lights went out and the doors closed, and he stumbled home, to fall on the bunk in a deep stupor.

As for the lawyer, he could not help but feel a thrill of pleasure at the success of his efforts. He had gained his end and he had done so without any unpleasant disturbance. But Mr. Everington's feeling of satisfaction was not wholly unalloyed. There was Helen. The removal of Mrs. Hawkins to a place of safety might bring harshest treatment if not real peril upon the child. Mr. Everington felt that he could not delay for an instant in securing her welfare. A job he felt sure he had already procured for her. What bothered him now was to know how to protect the girl from her brutal father. As like as not that individual would take from her every cent she earned, but worse than that he might abuse her—doubtless would.

Mr. Everington could see but one way out of the difficulty. He must take the girl away, too. He must put her in a home where she would be properly cared for and be safe from Hawkins. But the law gave him

no authority thus to step in between Helen and her foster-father. Fortunately the girl still lacked a trifle of being sixteen years of age, and so was still subject to the authority of the Children's Court. Thanks to the benevolent tyranny the law allows the justices of that bench, Judge Wilmot could do what Mr. Everington dared not. So to his friend of the Children's Court went the lawyer.

As he was speeding toward the Judge's home, Mr. Everington could not but ponder over the manner in which he was becoming involved in the family fortunes of the Wainrights. Ever widening, like a circle in the water, had grown his burden of responsibility. Reluctantly he had consented to be a Big Brother to Joe, when his understanding of his task was that it involved nothing more than an occasional meeting with Joe, an occasional night at the theatre with him, and a kind word now and then to show the lad that he cared what became of him. And now, within less than a month from the day he became Joe's Big Brother, he had put Joe in school, gotten him permission to sell papers, bought him clothes, sent his mother away to a hospital, practically gotten a job for Helen, while now he was about to take her away from the coal barge, too, and so in a measure become responsible for her welfare in addition to Joe's.

At the thought of all these things, the mere sugges-

tion of which, a month ago, he would have regarded as wild imaginings of a disordered brain, Mr. Everington merely laughed. The whole situation was so incongruous that he chuckled over it as at a good joke. Surely the leaven of human kindness was working in the great lawyer's heart.

Judge Wilmot rubbed his hands with satisfaction when he learned of his friend's varied activities. He commended him heartily.

"We can settle the whole matter nicely," he said. "I'll have the girl brought to me in the morning on a charge of improper guardianship, and order her to be removed from the canal-boat to a suitable home. My probation officer will look after that, so you will not need to waste any more of your time."

"That's fine," rejoined the lawyer, "but I—well, the truth is I don't think it would be wasting my time, Judge, to see that the little girl is properly cared for. You let your probation officer find a place for the girl and I will go with her to see if it is all right."

So the matter was settled. Helen appeared before Judge Wilmot the next morning, was taken quietly to his chambers where he had a long talk with her, and without ever realizing that she had been arrested and arraigned in a court, she went away again, her heart brimming with happiness. She had seen the last of her dreaded stepfather and the hated old coal barge.

A pleasant boarding place was found where wholesome influences would surround her. Mr. Everington took her to the landlady and insured kind treatment for the girl by winning the landlady's heart with his genial manners and his touching story of the girl's hard experiences. Then he took her to the great cloak factory where the girl speedily made a place for herself by her skill. She was given six dollars a week. Truly the Wainright family was on the way to better things.

CHAPTER XV

A DESCENT ON THE *MATTIE FORD*

BUT if affairs were going better with the Wainrights, they were far otherwise with Charles Hawkins. Like many another man, he had held in slight esteem a possession, which, once taken from him, he prized highly. He had not missed the water till the well ran dry. However much Joe's mother may have regretted marrying Hawkins, she had been a good wife. She had been patient, gentle, even kind; and only once, on the occasion of their quarrel on the street, had she voiced the indignation she so often felt at his conduct. Perhaps her lot had been happier if she had. Instead she had borne his ill treatment uncomplainingly.

To the best of her ability she had kept the cabin clean and warm, though nothing could ever have made it seem homelike, and she had cooked the food regularly and well, whenever there was food to cook. When she was unable to do these duties, Helen had performed them.

Now there was no one to keep the cabin clean, to tend the fire, or to cook the food. By one of those odd

twists of character nature delights in, Charles Hawkins was a man who wanted things clean and neat, but had no aptness himself in household duties. So his cabin soon came to be in fearful condition. He could not cook and he was amazed at the way his money melted at the restaurants. If he remained long absent from the barge, his fire went out, and he came back to a cold and cheerless abode.

For physical comforts he was in a bad way. He was just as badly off otherwise. His continuous dissipation was undermining his health. His strength was fast leaving him. As he drank more and more, he paid less attention to his work, and now he was under threat of dismissal unless he mended his ways. Once this job was gone, Hawkins knew he was in the gutter for good.

He was too old and besotted to stir himself and take a fresh hold on life. So he sat and brooded and slowly drank himself toward absolute ruin. And as he brooded he came to hate Mr. Everington, whom he blamed for all his troubles, and then Joe, and finally the entire Wainright family. Day by day this ugly mood grew, until he was in a very dangerous frame of mind.

At this point he began to hunt for his absent wife. He had not been told where she was going. But he assumed that the same hospital that had given her medicine must now be her place of refuge. He went

to the House of Relief and demanded to see his wife. When he was informed that his wife was not there, he created a scene, declaring that everybody was leagued against him. He thought that the hospital authorities were deceiving him. After several tempestuous visits, on the last of which he was threatened with arrest if he returned, he concluded that perhaps his wife had been taken elsewhere. He knew that patients were sometimes transferred from one hospital to another. But where she could be, or how to find her, Hawkins did not know. His brain was now too much dulled for sharp thinking. But he did not return to the hospital, and so probably kept out of trouble. Instead, he went back to his brooding and his thoughts of vengeance.

At this juncture it happened that Mrs. Hawkins needed the few garments she had left behind her in her hasty flight from the *Mattie Ford*. At her request the hospital authorities informed Mr. Everington. The lawyer at once sent a message to Joe, asking him to come to him during the luncheon hour. They ate together at a quick lunch counter, and Mr. Everington could not have derived more satisfaction from the best meal to be had at his exclusive luncheon club than he got from that first informal meal with Joe.

"Want to join me on a little adventure this afternoon, Joe?" inquired Mr. Everington, when the meal was nearly finished.

"Sure," said Joe. "What are you going to do?"

Ordinarily Joe would have said "Whatcha goin' to do?" But between the efforts of his teacher, and Mr. Everington's reiterated admonition that "if you want to associate with nice people you must learn to talk like them," Joe was improving his diction. At times, when he could remember, his language was painfully correct. And this was one of the times.

"I'm going to the *Mattie Ford* to get your mother's clothes."

"Hully gee!" exclaimed Joe, forgetting everything in his excitement. "Whatcha goin' to do wit' Hawkins?"

"I don't know, Joe," was the reply, "but I want you to help me. Will you?"

"Will I?" repeated Joe with eagerness. "I'd go t' hell for you, Mr. Everington."

"Hush, Joe," said the lawyer, though he smiled with pleasure the while he administered the rebuke, "that isn't the way nice people talk."

Joe's face clouded. "I mean—I mean I'm wit' you," he said.

So it was arranged that at four o'clock the two should meet near the coal dock to rifle the *Mattie Ford*.

Joe was on hand long before the hour set, but he was very careful not to show himself to the vengeful

barge captain. He peeped in at Kelley's back door, but saw nothing of Hawkins. Slipping along behind trucks and wagons, he carefully reconnoitred the neighborhood of the coal dock. The barge was there all right, but Hawkins was not to be seen. Taking a searching look about him, to make sure he would not be surprised from behind, Joe crept aboard the *Mattie Ford*, and peeped in at the cabin window. His stepfather was sitting by the stove. He looked very fierce as he sat brooding in his chair. Joe shivered with apprehension and tiptoed away to await with what patience he could the arrival of his Big Brother.

When that individual appeared, he carried a large suit-case. Joe ran to him and told him what he had learned about Hawkins.

"Ain't you afraid?" he asked.

"No," said Mr. Everington.

Joe looked at his friend dubiously. "He got away from three cops and a bulldog in Jersey City," he said. "What'll he do with you?"

Mr. Everington laughed. "Wait and see," he said. He gave the suit-case to Joe. "You keep out of sight," he said, "and when I get the old fellow out of his den, slip in and get your mother's clothes."

Joe raced over to a near-by pile of freight and secreted himself under the tarpaulin cover so that he could peep out.

Mr. Everington warily approached the coal barge. "Hello, Hawkins!" he called loudly from the edge of the pier.

He had to shout three times before the brooding man within heard him and slowly shuffled to the deck. Once he saw who was calling him, the barge captain moved quickly enough.

"It's you, eh?" he shouted with an oath, and came straight for the lawyer.

"Yes," said the latter with apparent unconcern. "Policeman Sullivan and I thought we'd come have a talk with you about your wife."

Hawkins' step faltered and he glanced apprehensively around.

"Let's go over to Kelley's and have a drink while we talk things over," suggested Everington.

"All right," said Hawkins, and he turned toward the saloon; but all the way across the "farm" his eyes wandered restlessly on this side and that.

"Sullivan will be along in a minute," said the lawyer, noting the restless gaze.

Fear kept Hawkins quiet and fairly civil. The generous drink of high-grade whiskey—something beyond Hawkins' own purse—somewhat mollified him. Another drink followed and another, all from the same bottle. The lawyer did not mention Mrs. Hawkins. Instead he started a conversation about the sea and the

old-timers of the water-front, and soon Hawkins was boastfully telling of the deeds of his youth when he "sailed with the best of 'em out o' New York." His spirits rose as he painted the picture of his younger days. He straightened up, threw out his chest, and became in his own imagination the sturdy, able seaman he was picturing. His sorrows were forgotten in the exhilaration from the genial liquor. He forgot his enmity for the man before him—forgot everything, in fact, except that more felicitous youth he was babbling about. And when the lawyer bade him good-bye, not forgetting to leave him with a full glass to keep him behind, he shook hands as though parting from an old friend.

Meantime Joe had not been idle. The minute his Big Brother and his stepfather disappeared within the portals of Kelley's hostelry, Joe darted aboard the *Mattie Ford*. He was tingling all over with delicious excitement. In his eagerness he fumbled ineffectually at the door-knob. And when he got inside he set to packing his case with feverish eagerness. Suppose Hawkins should kill Mr. Everington and then catch him in the cabin. He could not make his hands go fast enough. Without folding or wrapping the separate garments, he snatched them from peg and chair back and thrust them into the case. Then, hardly daring to breathe, he tiptoed to the door, saw that the coast was

clear, and was off the coal barge and up the waterfront in a second. When he finally convinced himself that his burly stepfather was not at his heels, he stopped, panting like a steam-engine.

When he had gotten his breath, he thought out his plan of campaign. Leaving the suit-case in the custody of an accommodating barber, he went warily back toward the coal dock, ready to fly at an instant's warning. But everything appeared to be as usual. There was no fight, no disturbance of any kind in sight. He waited and waited. After a long time came Mr. Everington forth from Kelley's. Joe looked him over with an apprehensive interest that almost gave way to disappointment when he saw that his Big Brother bore not so much as a scratch.

They got the suit-case, which Mr. Everington took to his office. When he opened it, he found a torn skirt, an old waist, part of a corset, a pair of Hawkins' shoes, two pairs of trousers with holes in the seats, a derby hat, and sundry other articles of masculine apparel. He sat down and laughed until the tears ran from his eyes. When the suit-case finally reached the hospital at Inwood, it was filled with articles of woman's apparel. But all were new and fresh.

CHAPTER XVI

WHAT HAPPENED TO HENRY

DURING the weeks he was winning the confidence of Joe and smoothing the path of Joe's mother and sister, Mr. Everington had not lost sight of Henry—that is, he had not mentally lost sight of the cripple. Physically, indeed, the lad had vanished from his view. The only time that the lawyer had ever actually seen the cripple was on the occasion of Joe's fight and arrest. That view was of the briefest sort, a mere glance at the deformed figure on the sidewalk. For on the occasion of Joe's arrest for being without a permit to sell papers, Henry had vanished from his accustomed haunts. He was in the same fix as Joe, so far as a permit was regarded, and he dreaded the police even more than Joe did, because he could not run from them as Joe could. He had no means of escape should the guardians of the law decide to take him. To be on the safe side, he sought out new fields of activity, and not until the very afternoon that Joe was arrested for defending Henry had Joe set eyes on his brother since his first visit to Judge Wilmot's court.

On that afternoon Henry again sought refuge in a

strange part of the city. He was right in assuming that he was wanted, but altogether wrong in his assumption as to who wanted him and why he was wanted. He supposed the police were after him. Like his younger brother, and hundreds of other children of the streets, his ideas of the police were entirely erroneous. To him they were dragons, fierce and terrible. If they were after him, they could want him for one reason only—to do some harm to him. He did not understand that under those heavy blue coats often beat warm hearts. He could not comprehend that when a patrolman chased a street urchin it was sometimes for the urchin's own good. But the ones who wanted Henry now were not the police. Joe and Mr. Everington and Judge Wilmot all wanted him. The plan was to send Henry to school along with Joe, and let him sell papers after school hours.

A general alarm was sent out to the police at Judge Wilmot's request, but if any policemen saw Henry, they neglected to bring him in. The Children's Court attendants were too busy to hunt for him. Joe looked for his brother high and low, for Joe was now eager to have Henry begin his schooling. But for a long time the search was in vain.

Joe himself was making rapid strides in learning. He was not studying merely because he had been sent to school, but because now he saw the utility of knowl-

edge. His year on the streets had taught him that knowledge is power—and power is the same thing as money. Every time his Big Brother saw Joe he let fall some word as to the utility of education. He had told Joe plainly that all of his own great success was based on knowledge, and that if Joe would but study hard there was no height to which he could not climb. To Joe the lawyer's words were gospel. The way he dug into his books was amazing. Joe's teacher aided him all she could, and Joe was rapidly making up for the time he had spent on the streets, even despite the short hours he spent in school. He knew that education led to the coveted job he wanted—a job from which “no cop could chase” him. And that delightful haven he wanted to share with Henry.

It was high time that Henry should reach that haven, or some other equally desirable. Under the influence of the streets he was fast degenerating. His very success broke down his moral fibre. The sturdiness that had come to Joe through struggle was entirely lacking in Henry. While Joe was toiling untiringly to earn twenty or thirty cents a day, Henry had often taken in three times as much. But he did not earn it. People with more kindness than judgment paid him double for his wares, or even gave him stray coins outright; and we already know how he had passed to an attitude of easy complaisance under such charity. By

this time Henry was on his way to become a beggar for life.

When he betook himself from the region of the ferry, he drifted to the Bowery, and there he was quickly observed by those who saw profit in his deformity. They cultivated his acquaintance, seeking to ingratiate themselves with him. They invited him to their nightly gathering of beggars in one of the vilest dens of that vile thoroughfare. Here Henry met other cripples, genuine and fraudulent, and a hundred other breeds of mendicants who prey upon the sympathetic with their tales of woe. He was shown how to make his own deformity appear a dozen times more pitiful, how to make his appeals for assistance more touching. He was being schooled in all the arts of beggary in one of the most successful schools of beggary in existence.

Though he had not become wholly degenerate, he was dangerously near to the brink—how near may be judged from the fact that when Joe one day espied Henry at Chatham Square, and essayed to take him away, Henry did not want to go. Joe was amazed. He told Henry excitedly of the good fortune that had befallen the family, and of the good things in store for Henry himself. Even then the cripple went with reluctance. Perhaps he meditated a return to the Bowery, but it never saw him more.

Though Henry had undoubtedly degenerated, he had

not reached or even approached the point where he was beyond recovery. His heart was still the heart of a child. An act of genuine kindness touched him more deeply than it would have most children, for in his sorrowful little life acts of kindness had been rare. Like a suffering stray dog, he was ready to lick the hand that stroked him. And this was the more so from the fact that though he had had little of real kindness, he had had overmuch of false kindness, the kindness that would toss him a scornful nickel, but blush to take him by the hand. That sort of a giver Henry was quick to detect.

For the same reason he felt a rush of gratitude when Meredith Everington came to him at the lodging-house, where Joe had taken him, and sat down beside him and talked long and kindly to him. It was the turning point in Henry's life. He could feel the man's interest in him. Ever afterward he cherished in his heart the knowledge that this great man was concerned as to what became of Henry Wainright. In the ocean of his future existence this was the life-saving thought that he clung to. There was some one who cared. And when Mr. Everington, seeing the condition of Henry's bloodless body and listening to the telltale cough that was fastening upon him, made arrangements for his care in the same hospital where his mother was, Henry's heart overflowed with gratitude to his benefactor.

He heard afresh from Joe the story of all that had passed. Helen came to see him. The renewed contact with his family, the clean, wholesome surroundings, the inspiring talk of Joe, the kindness extended to him, and finally the thought of his mother, whom he loved dearly, all combined to produce a powerful effect on Henry. He was at that age when he was quickly susceptible to any influence. He could not help contrasting this better side of life with his recent experiences, and he saw, as Joe did, that the better life was worth striving for. But unlike Joe, he lacked the moral strength to struggle forward. He needed, even more than Joe did, the sustaining influence that had come to them both in the realization that Mr. Everington would help them and that he cared.

At length came the day for Henry to go to the hospital. Late in the afternoon Mr. Everington went from his office to the lodging-house. This was the hour he had selected for all his services to his little protégés. To his surprise he had found that being a big brother did not involve the dreaded loss of time he had urged as an objection to the task. It simply meant that he altered the direction of some of his after-office hours. He had suffered no loss of revenue, but he had gained largely in human experience, and even profited physically from the hours spent with Joe in the open air. So now he came to take Henry himself to his new

abode instead of sending him with an agent. Joe was waiting for him at the door as he stepped from his limousine.

They found Henry in a state of pleasurable excitement. Joe had told him he was to go to the hospital that afternoon. He was eager to go, for Joe had hinted to him that perhaps the doctors could do more for him than cure his cough; perhaps they might even be able to straighten the crooked little feet. And though this was a dream never to be realized, Henry treasured the suggestion in his mind with a wistful eagerness, and longed to reach the hospital in order that the doctors might at least have a chance. When Mr. Everington appeared, Henry greeted him with a tearful welcome that plainly showed his nervous eagerness. He put on his coat, said good-bye to the kind people at the lodging-house, and hobbled down the stairs, assisted by Joe.

A block distant ran a line of street-cars. Henry started up the block, clattering along on his crutches almost as fast as Joe could walk. He had gone perhaps fifty feet when Mr. Everington emerged from the door of the lodging-house.

"Here's your car, Henry," he called after the cripple.

Henry hastened back and stared at the handsome motor-car standing at the curb. "That—for me?" he asked incredulously.

"For you," said the lawyer with a smile.

Henry's lips moved as though to speak, but no sound came. Instead the tears streamed down his cheeks. He turned and silently climbed into the car.

"Hop in, Joe," said Mr. Everington, and they were off.

CHAPTER XVII

A BLUE-EYED SCHOOL-TEACHER

WITH Mrs. Hawkins and Henry in the hospital, with Helen happily at work, and with Joe in school, Mr. Everington felt as though his labors for the Wainright family were about concluded. On his way to his office some days after he had taken Henry to the hospital, Mr. Everington mentally reviewed the entire case. Only a few brief weeks had passed since he first set eyes on Joe in Judge Wilmot's court. Yet in those few weeks a family had been raised from the depths of misery and despondency to comparative comfort and a lively hope for the future. A suffering woman had been put within reach of health, and better still three children had been saved to decency and possible usefulness.

When Mr. Everington thought it all over he could hardly believe it. The results were great. The effort that achieved the results was negligible in quantity. An hour or two, now and then, given to this stricken family instead of being wasted in a club, and the thing was done. It had been as easy as switching a freight-train from the wrong track to the right one—simply a

matter of turning energies into another direction. Apparently his job of Big Brother was about concluded and Mr. Everington felt regret at the idea. But the idea was destined to vanish about as quickly as it had come.

For in the morning's mail was a report from Joe's school-teacher—one of the special semimonthly reports she had agreed to send. Smiling, Mr. Everington tore open the envelope and glanced over its contents. The smile vanished from his face. Joe was marked "poor" in all of his studies, and he had repeated absences charged against him. Mr. Everington was struck dumb.

That afternoon the lawyer had a long talk with Joe.

"What has gone wrong at school?" asked the lawyer.

"Nothin'," answered Joe, almost sullenly.

"Then what does this report mean?" And Mr. Everington held out the telltale paper.

Joe was silent.

"Don't you like your studies?"

"Sure."

"Then what is the trouble? Is it with the teacher?"

Again Joe was silent.

"I think that I'll have to see your teacher," said Joe's Big Brother.

Joe moved uneasily. "She's no good."

"I thought you liked her."

"I did," said Joe, "but I don't no more."

"So that's the trouble, eh? Now tell me what she did that you don't like."

Joe hung his head and twisted his little hands nervously, but said nothing.

"Did she scold you, Joe?"

"Yes," said Joe.

"And what did you do to make her scold you?"

The little fingers twisted and untwisted. Joe's whole body squirmed. But he made no reply.

"Come, Joe," said the lawyer. "Is this the way to treat your Big Brother?"

Joe looked up quickly. He saw what he thought was a pained look in the lawyer's face. Impulsively he threw his arms around his Big Brother's neck. "I—I told her I loved her," he faltered, "but I don't. I don't love nobody but you." And now the tears were welling in his eyes.

So that was it—Joe, like his mother, could not stand kindness. He had tumbled head over heels in love with his blue-eyed teacher who had been so helpful to him. And now his little soul was smarting at the ungracious response to his devotion. Mr. Everington knew that at twelve an attack of the grand passion is seldom a serious matter; but he also knew that if Joe's sensitive nature were to be saved from harm, the af-

fair must be handled discreetly. Here was where the blue-eyed young teacher had come short. She understood childish minds better than she did childish hearts.

Very serious and kind was Mr. Everington, when, after a moment's reflection, he went on: "So you told your teacher that you loved her, and she was cross about it. Is that it?"

"Yes," sniffled Joe.

"That was unkind, Joe. Even if she did not love you, she should not have been cross. Try not to think about it when you talk to her hereafter."

"I ain't going to talk to her any more," said Joe. "I ain't going back to school."

In vain did Mr. Everington argue with the lad. Joe was firm in his determination. He would not go back to school. Mr. Everington could have appealed to the love Joe had just confessed for him, and Joe would have suffered the martyrdom of facing his blue-eyed teacher again: for now the strongest influence in his little heart was the real affection he had come to feel for his Big Brother. But Mr. Everington knew that this was a dangerous way to settle the matter. He wanted Joe to continue his studies, not because his Big Brother requested it, but because Joe himself desired to do so. To supply that motive was now Mr. Everington's task. Suddenly he ceased pleading.

"You're a big sucker, Joe," he said.

Joe was shocked into tearlessness by this sudden change. Doubtless, like the rest of us, he did not enjoy being called names. He sat bolt upright and looked mad.

"You're a big sucker, Joe," repeated the lawyer; and before Joe could open his mouth, he went on, "I never before believed that you would let anybody cheat you out of a thing you had paid for."

Joe looked puzzled. "I wouldn't," he said defiantly.

"But that's just what you are doing, Joe. You've helped to pay this teacher for teaching you, and now you are letting your feelings cheat you out of what belongs to you. The teacher doesn't care whether you get an education or not. She told you that she didn't care anything about you. And now you are going to cheat yourself out of your chance in life just because you feel sore at her. You're a sucker, Joe."

Joe's eyes began to snap. "I ain't," he said. "And I don't help pay her."

"You don't?" exclaimed Mr. Everington. "Then who does pay the school-teachers?"

"The city," said Joe.

"And where does the city get the money to pay them?"

"From taxes."

"And who pays the taxes?"

“Why, the street-car company, and the gas company, and the telephone people, and the people that own houses.”

“Exactly,” said Mr. Everington. “And where do they get the money?”

“Why, from rents, and car-fares, and ——”

“That’s exactly where all the money comes from,” interrupted Mr. Everington. “Every time you ride in a street-car, part of your nickel helps to pay the taxes. Every time you use a telephone, you are helping to pay for the public schools. Am I right or not?”

“You’re right,” said Joe.

“Very well, then. You are helping to pay the salary of a school-teacher and now you are going to cheat yourself out of the education that belongs to you because you don’t happen to like the teacher. Suppose you paid the butcher for a pound of beefsteak and then refused to take it because you didn’t like the butcher. Wouldn’t you be a sucker?”

“You bet,” said Joe.

“And aren’t you a sucker now, if you don’t go back and get that education?”

Joe laughed. “I’m going back to-morrow,” he said.

“I knew that you would, Joe, when you understood the case. And remember, Joe, that going to school is just as much of a business as selling newspapers. You

sell newspapers to get bread and butter. You are going to school to learn how to get more bread and butter. Don't forget that. That is your business just now. And be nice to the teacher and she will be nice to you. She was cross with you because she was trying to attend to her business of teaching little boys. She was simply trying to keep you from interfering with her business. Now you go back to school and don't let her interfere with your business."

"I'll go," said Joe, giving his Big Brother a hug. He started away, but turned back. "I was a sucker, wasn't I?" he said, and was gone.

Mr. Everington leaned back in his chair and chuckled over the whole affair. Then he turned to his desk, picked up a pen, and wrote a note, such as only men of his sort can write.

"You can imagine how surprised I was at your last report about Joe," ran the note. "The child has just left me, after telling me the whole story of his difficulty. It seems that he has paid you the highest compliment that any man or boy can pay to any woman. It must make you feel very happy to know that you exercise such a wonderful influence over this little lad, who has had much in his life that was hard and bitter. What an opportunity for service you have.

"If you will but be kind and patient with Joe, you can do anything with him. You will pardon this suggestion, I pray, because I have had a longer and perhaps better opportunity to find out just what the lad is like. He is stubborn, as probably any strong-willed

individual must be ; but his heart is as tender as a flower. It is easily hurt. You cannot drive him an inch, but you can lead him around the world.

“I know that you will do your best to help him. I know that you are genuinely interested in him. He is on the way to a splendid manhood, and when he has arrived and looks back at the influences that have moulded his character, I know he will find one of the most potent was that exerted upon him by the teacher he likes so much. I shall ever be grateful to you for your efforts in behalf of little Joe.

“Faithfully yours,

“MEREDITH EVERINGTON.”

CHAPTER XVIII

JOE MEETS HIS BIG BROTHER'S WIFE

NEEDLESS to say, there was no further lapse in Joe's scholarship. A trifle of effort by Joe's Big Brother had again saved him from a resumption of his life in the gutter—for had there been no Big Brother to persuade Joe to return to his duty, he must inevitably have drifted back to the streets again. But there still remained a big obstacle to the things Mr. Everington had in mind for Joe. The obstacle was Mr. Everington's wife. She had not yet been won to little Joe.

In fact Mr. Everington had as yet made no effort to win her. He knew his wife's proud, haughty nature too well to try to force her to like Joe. In many respects she was amazingly like himself. She needed to be persuaded. She could be made to help Joe only if she came to like him. And the lawyer had been waiting for a chance to take Joe to her under circumstances that would help her to like the lad. Mrs. Everington laid great stress upon dress. And in selecting Joe's clothes Mr. Everington had had his wife's prejudice in mind. The garments he had procured for Joe were

not only serviceable but they were good-looking, and they set off to particular advantage Joe's red cheeks and his cheery face. Had Mrs. Everington set eyes on the wretched looking creature that Joe was on the day of his arraignment before Judge Wilmot, she would never have had anything to do with him. Of that Mr. Everington was certain. But now Joe was as pleasing in appearance as any lad of twelve could well be. Mr. Everington felt well satisfied in that direction. He felt that the first step toward establishing cordial relations between his wife and his protégé had been accomplished. The next step was to bring them together in such a way as to make Mrs. Everington like the lad. So far as was in his power Mr. Everington had made sure that Joe would like his wife. He had spoken frequently to the lad of her beauty and her many admirable traits.

How to make Mrs. Everington like Joe was a problem over which the lawyer had studied much during the six weeks since he took Joe under his wing. He was trying hard to improve Joe's English. If he could accomplish that, he would have removed a second obstacle. Joe was doing his best to speak correctly, not so much because he yet felt the need of improvement as because he saw how very greatly his Big Brother desired that improvement. Excepting at times, when he was excited, Joe now did fairly well.

Still, Mr. Everington did not want to take Joe directly into his own home, because there Joe would be subjected to merciless scrutiny. If Joe and Mrs. Everington could meet somewhere else, where the lad would not feel that he was under such close observation, and where Mrs. Everington's attention would not be centred wholly on Joe, the result might be better. And this was the way Mr. Everington planned to make the two acquainted. He at last thought he saw an opportunity in a visit to the country club. It was the first that he had been able to arrange since his first mention of Joe to his wife.

That mention of Joe to his wife had indeed been the only one. When Mr. Everington saw his wife's determined opposition to his new project, he knew that he could not drive her into acquiescence, so he had said nothing more about the matter. But his silence did not deceive his wife. She knew well enough that her husband was looking after Joe. Meredith Everington never spoke to her as he had spoken with reference to Joe unless he was absolutely determined upon a thing. Then she knew there was no turning him back. And so, although her husband was silent, she knew that he was helping Joe; and she wondered what the boy looked like, and what her husband was doing for him. Had he known it, Mr. Everington probably could not have done anything that would more surely arouse his

wife's interest in Joe. It is not altogether certain that he did not know it; for he was well acquainted with his wife's great bump of curiosity. The oftener she thought of Joe, the more she wanted to see him—to see what this strange creature her husband had told her about looked like. Her curiosity was the more piqued because word came to her through the charitably inclined in her circle of friends that Judge Wilmot, who was an aristocrat himself, had been telling the most interesting stories about her husband's experiences with his Little Brother. Finally she could stand it no longer.

At breakfast one day she asked him bluntly when she was to see Joe. Mr. Everington was in a quandary. He was delighted that her curiosity had driven her to open the subject. He rightly surmised that she had heard something about Joe and his escapades. The questions that puzzled him now were these: Was his wife so piqued because he had concealed from her things that other women knew that she would "take it out," as we say, on Joe? Or was her curiosity now so aroused that she would want to know Joe as well as see him? These questions flashed quickly through his mind as he was slowly framing an answer.

What Mrs. Everington had actually said was, "How did that paragon of a caddie you were telling me about turn out, and when am I to see him?"

Now the lawyer replied, "I can tell you nothing about his virtues as a caddie, Elise, because I haven't been to the country club since I told you about him. But I was thinking that we could go out for the weekend, if you are agreeable, and I'll try the youngster out then."

He had answered her question, but he had volunteered nothing about Joe. His reply was intended further to pique her curiosity, and it did.

"I shall be glad to go, Meredith," she rejoined. "I've been wanting to get out into the country for weeks."

"Then we'll drive out on Friday afternoon," said her husband, but he made no further mention of Joe. He intended to pick up the lad at the ferry and take him in the car with them.

In ample time he sent this message to Joe. "I am going to the country on Friday, and want you to go with me. I have some work I want you to do. Be careful to get yourself ready, and meet me at the ferry at four o'clock."

The message made Joe as happy as a lark. Not since he left the South so long ago had he been in the country. For almost two years he had known nothing but brick and mortar, cobblestones, and asphalt. The only reminders of those old, sweet times under the oleanders were the little flower-pots he saw in win-

dows, and the wonderful displays at the florists' shops. And all these pretty blossoms were beyond his reach. Now he was going to the country—the real country, with its shady trees, its grassy meadows, and its daisy-studded fields. Hardly could he wait for the days to pass. And when at last came Friday afternoon, he raced home to prepare for the journey. For the hundredth time he read his Big Brother's note: "I have some work I want you to do. Be careful to get yourself ready." The thing puzzled him.

"‘I have some work I want you to do,’" he repeated. "I wonder what it is."

Joe scratched his head and tried to think what men do in the country. He recalled having seen them hauling logs, ploughing, scattering manure, but he did not believe that Mr. Everington wanted him to do any of these things. He remembered that he had heard his Big Brother speak of a big house he went to, where he spent week-ends.

"It must be something to do about that house," thought Joe. Then an inspiration came to him. "I know," he cried aloud. "He wants me to carry the ashes out of the cellar." He reflected a moment. "That's a dirty job," he muttered, "and it would dirty my clothes." Then the truth came over him. This was what Mr. Everington had in mind when he said, "Be careful to get yourself ready."

From under his bed Joe dragged the old suit that he had worn the day he first saw his Big Brother. Mr. Everington had wanted him to throw it away, but Joe, wisely provident from the lesson of a cold winter passed with insufficient clothing, had refused to part with this reserve. The lodging-house people had washed the garments, which had ever since lain under Joe's cot, rolled up tight. They were clean, though dusty and ridged with a thousand creases. Joe surveyed the suit ruefully, but manfully got into it. He was even more rueful when he looked at himself in the glass. The suit appeared even worse than it had seemed when soiled. And Joe himself looked like a shriveled walnut, so creased and seamed was this outer integument, and so shrunken did he appear in his man's size covering. Joe made a face, but bravely set out for the ferry. He did not care if he did look ridiculous. He was doing it for his Big Brother. People could laugh at him all they liked.

Thus he appeared at the ferry, as ragged and as wretched as ever he had looked, when the Everington limousine turned into the plaza and rolled toward the ferry gate. Fortunately his face and hands were clean beyond reproach.

Meredith Everington glanced about the ferry entrance for Joe, as his car slowly approached the boat shed. He could see nothing of him. There was a

ragamuffin by the gate, but Mr. Everington's eye swept by him without a glance at his face.

"It's strange," he muttered. "I know he got my note."

Mrs. Everington looked out. "Perhaps that is he," she said, indicating the tattered figure by the gate. The lad's appearance corresponded to the only description of Joe she had ever had.

With a bound Mr. Everington was out of the car. He stopped the driver with a motion of his hand and strode over to Joe. All his plans had gone glimmering. He thought Joe was playing a trick on him. He was very angry.

"What does this mean?" he demanded sternly.

The smile faded from Joe's face. "I didn't want to wear 'em," said Joe, "but you asked me to. *Don't* you want me to carry out your ashes?"

"Carry out ashes?" repeated Mr. Everington, bewildered.

"Sure," replied Joe. "You said you had some work for me to do."

Mr. Everington now comprehended the situation. "It is my fault for not being more explicit," he said. "But where are your good clothes, Joe? You can't go to the country club looking like that."

"I've got 'em on underneath," said Joe.

There was nothing to do but make the best of the

situation. "Come here, Joe," said Mr. Everington, leading the way to the waiting motor-car. All the way he was thinking hard as to what he should say. For once the lawyer was nonplused. "Elise," he said, simply, "this is little Joe, and this is the way he appeared the first time I saw him."

Mrs. Everington looked Joe over from head to foot; but her glance was not unkind. Meantime Joe's own eyes were not idle. With loving interest he surveyed the lady of whom his Big Brother had so often spoken, for he did not suspect that she was hostile to him. He looked into her deep, dark eyes, noted the soft pink cheeks and the perfect features. Then and there Joe transferred his affections from his school-teacher to his Big Brother's wife.

"You're just as pretty as he said you was," he said.

Mrs. Everington blushed. A bright smile lighted her face. "You're a nice little boy," she said, and shook his hand warmly.

Out of the mouths of babes shall come forth wisdom. Joe had said the one thing in all the world that could have won the proud beauty's heart. With his naive remark he had accomplished what Meredith Everington had been unable to do.

"Run to the baggage-room and peel off those rags quick," said Mr. Everington, scarcely able to conceal his delight.

Joe did as he was bidden to do, and while Joe was absent in the baggage-room, Mr. Everington briefly related to his wife the reasons for Joe's appearance in his rags.

Joe was back in no time. His haste had flushed his cheeks and made his eyes sparkle. He had never appeared to better advantage. "You are even prettier than he said you were," remarked Mrs. Everington as she looked at the smiling little face. "Come here and sit beside me."

CHAPTER XIX

A BARGAIN

THERE was still enough daylight remaining, when the Everington car bowled up to the country club after a swift run, for a round of nine holes. Mr. Everington found an acquaintance, who was waiting for some one to play with, and went at once to his room to don his golf togs. Mrs. Everington discovered some of her women friends in the great living-room and was warmly welcomed to their little circle.

Joe, meantime, being left to his own devices, proceeded with boyish curiosity to examine his new surroundings. The club-house stood on a rise of ground overlooking the trim green of the rolling golf course and the dark border of woods beyond that edged the playing space. It did not for an instant appear to be the great roomy building it really was. The deceptive slope of the dormered Dutch roof, the cozy appearance of the wide porch, tucked behind great pillars and shaded by clambering vines now showing their first tint of spring green, the overarching trees, and the sharp shoulder of the hill behind it, into which the buildings seemed to nestle, all combined to give the

structure the appearance of a snug white cottage, rather than the look of a large club-house. Certainly the architect had done his work well.

Joe did not appreciate the deceptiveness of the perfectly proportioned lines. He was too young to understand the architectural perfection of the structure before him, but he did feel that indefinable sense of pleasure that comes to every one in the contemplation of a beautiful house. Somehow this house made Joe think of the little white house in Alabama more than any other place he had ever seen. In that cottage he had passed the happiest days of his life—in fact, the only really happy days he had ever known. Straightway he began to have for this snug club-house a feeling not unlike the affectionate recollection he cherished of his old home in the South. He began to wonder if he should ever see that home again. He did not know ; but he made up his mind that some day he would have a home of his own just like it, or just like this club-house—he didn't care which.

From the neighborhood of the club-house he wandered across the tennis courts toward the little golf house near the beginning of the course, where he could see several youngsters of his own age or thereabout, gathered in a compact little ring, looking down at something on the ground. Joe's curiosity was awakened. He hurried down to the group, and found

them playing craps. They were the course caddies, passing the time while awaiting employment. Joe joined the circle, but made no effort to get into the game. The caddies were too much engrossed in watching the dice roll to pay any attention to him. But one of them, who was also an onlooker, nodded to Joe; and when, a little later, he pulled out a pack of cigarettes, he offered one to Joe. Joe took it and lighted it. A moment later, as he was puffing away vigorously, a hand fell on his shoulder. Joe looked up. It was Mr. Everington. There was a frown on his face, but he merely said, "Come, Joe."

Joe threw away his cigarette and followed the lawyer to the teeing-ground. Mr. Everington produced a golf-ball and handed his bag of sticks to Joe. To the latter the game was an Egyptian mystery.

"I'm going to knock this ball around the field," said Mr. Everington, "and I want you to go ahead and watch it. Keep your eye on it or it will get lost. Whenever I want another club you are to bring the bag to me. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," said Joe. He thought golf must be a very stupid game.

Mr. Everington took some sand from a box near by and made a little cone, on which he placed the ball. Then he rubbed his hands carefully and even wiped

them with his handkerchief before taking his club. Joe watched him closely.

"Now run ahead," said Mr. Everington, "and be sure you keep your eye on the ball." Joe went a hundred feet. "Farther," called the lawyer. Joe doubled the distance. "Farther yet," called Mr. Everington. "Keep going until I tell you to stop."

Joe went a full hundred and fifty yards before he heard the order to stop. He turned around. "He's nutty," said Joe to himself. "He can't bat that ball way out here. Why, Larry Doyle couldn't knock a baseball that far." The captain of the Giants was Joe's baseball hero.

Just then Mr. Everington swung his club, the ball came speeding straight toward Joe, sailed over his head, and was lost to sight. Mr. Everington was a powerful driver. Joe ran in the direction the ball had taken, but could not find it. He was chagrined. Fortunately Mr. Everington had kept close watch and he discovered the ball at once. So there was no delay. Joe profited by the experience, and soon learned where to take his station and how to watch the ball.

He soon discovered that different clubs were wanted frequently, and between supplying clubs and going ahead of the shot, he was kept on the run. At the second tee Mr. Everington again made a sand cone and again carefully wiped his hands before teeing off.

"Don't like to dirty his hands," thought Joe to himself, "but I don't blame him. If I had such nice fingers and such a fine ring, I wouldn't want to either."

He laughed at the idea and glanced at his hands, now as grimy as usual. And while his Big Brother was finishing his put at the next hole, Joe fashioned a sand tee. It was only the first of the many thoughtful things he learned to do that proved that Mr. Everington was justified in his belief that Joe would make a paragon of a caddie.

Joe was given some supper with the servants, and later put to bed in one of the servants' beds. Unpretentious though the room was, to Joe it seemed like a palace. But he did not stay awake long enough to think about it. He had trotted his little legs nearly off in going round the course. After that first drive he had revised his ideas as to the game's being stupid. Perhaps it wasn't as exciting as baseball, but Joe knew it was a game that kept the caddie on the jump.

Long before his Big Brother appeared next morning, Joe was up and abroad. Through the middle of the course ran a water hazard, in the form of a swift-flowing brook. Joe had noted it the night before. Now he walked along its banks, following it into the dark wood, where it twisted among the trees and went brawling along over root and boulder. He was re-

mindful of the piney woods, where he used to gather blossoms with Helen for their crippled brother. But here, instead of pine-trees and hollies and live-oaks, there were hickories, and black and white oaks and maples, and slender birches, all radiant in their tender spring colors. Joe forgot everything else in his joy, and went on and on. Finally he came to a bed of marsh-marigolds. He plucked a great bunch of them. And then, from sheer need of having some one to share his happiness, he remembered his Big Brother and the golf game planned for the morning, and went tearing back to the club-house, his little heart all trembling lest he be tardy. He arrived just as Mrs. Everington was stepping out on the porch.

"Good-morning, Joe," she called to him cheerily. "What have you there?"

"Some flowers for you, Mrs. Everington," answered Joe, though until that very second he had never thought of giving the posies away.

Joe was warmed up by his run, and his cheeks were all aflame again. His hair was rumped, for he had thrust his cap in his pocket. He made a very pleasing picture as he stood there with the great handful of golden blossoms. Mrs. Everington felt her heart beat faster as the smiling child came up the steps and held out the flowers. "Thank you, Joe," she said warmly. "It was very thoughtful of you to bring them to me."

And on the impulse of the moment the haughty beauty bent and kissed this child of the gutter.

Then came Mr. Everington, who had not witnessed the caress, but who instantly added his praise to his wife's, so that Joe was suddenly abashed and remained silent instead of blurting out, as he had been about to do, that the gift was purely an accidental one. Surely fortune sometimes favors the timid as well as the brave.

Mr. Everington and his opponent played eighteen holes, then stopped to rest before starting another round. Mr. Everington's friend excused himself for a moment and started for the club-house. He was in need of a fresh handkerchief. At the club-house he was delayed by the ladies. Mr. Everington meantime sat down to rest and smoke. Joe forthwith produced a pack of cigarettes and lighted one.

"Throw that away quick," said Mr. Everington. "Mrs. Everington might see you."

"What if she does?" asked Joe defiantly, though he dropped the cigarette.

"If she saw you smoking, Joe, she might not like you any more," said the lawyer.

"But she likes you, and you smoke," said Joe.

"She might like me better if I didn't," said Mr. Everington.

"Did she tell you so?" asked Joe.

"Yes, lots of times," said the lawyer.

"And you didn't stop?" demanded Joe in a tone of amazement.

Mr. Everington was fairly cornered, for his wife very much disliked the smell of tobacco. Her requests for his discontinuance of the weed had been serious ones. "No, I didn't," was all that he could say.

"I'd stop in a minute if *she* asked me to," said Joe.

"Then why won't you stop for me?"

"Why should I," replied Joe, "when you smoke yourself?"

The Big Brother was silent a moment. "Joe," he said, "the reason I want you to stop is not because I dislike the smell of tobacco, but because cigarettes will hurt you. I want you to grow up a strong, able man so you can earn lots of money and have a fine home—like that." He pointed to the club-house, which was the only dwelling in sight.

"I'm going to," said Joe.

"But you can't earn all these nice things if you smoke."

"You did," said Joe.

Mr. Everington was silent. There was nothing he could say. Joe had done everything else he had asked him to do in the weeks since they met, except to stop smoking cigarettes. But through some strange per-

versity, this most serious of all his bad habits, Joe would not forswear. Time and again the lawyer had asked him to give up cigarettes, and though Joe smoked not overly many of them, he would never agree entirely to cease.

Mr. Everington's opponent returned with his fresh linen, apologized for the delay, and began the new round. Mr. Everington played poorly. Joe, who was beginning to understand some of the finer points of the play, was impatient with his poor shots. He was violently partisan and could not bear to see his Big Brother beaten.

All the way round Mr. Everington was thinking about Joe and his cigarettes. Joe was making such a fine start toward a good manhood, and Mr. Everington now loved the lad so much, that he was really grieved at Joe's persistence in this habit, which, he felt sure, would fasten itself more and more firmly on the lad and do him irreparable injury. He had tried everything within reason that he could think of, and he could not budge Joe. It provoked him. The very fact that he couldn't made him want to the more. What should he say to Joe that he had not already said? What should he do that he had not already done? By this time Mr. Everington felt keenly his moral responsibility for the welfare of this lad who trusted him so fully. Mr. Everington could think of only one

thing more he could do to stop Joe's smoking. This he didn't want to do. But there was no other way. He must try it. While he was fighting it out with himself, he drove his ball into the woods, and got into bad positions behind the bunkers, and played altogether such a wretched game that Joe, exasperated and ignorant of golf-links etiquette, began to hand out advice and clubs with equal freedom.

When the game was over and Joe and his Big Brother were returning to the club-house together, Mr. Everington said, "What do you suppose made me play such a poor game, Joe?"

"I don't know," said Joe. "It must have been something awful."

"It was," said Mr. Everington. "I was worrying about you and those cigarettes, Joe."

Joe's face became sober.

"I've got a proposition to make, Joe. If I stop smoking, will you?"

"Sure," said Joe. "Shake." And the grimy little fist was swallowed up in the lawyer's great, white hand.

That night Mr. Everington went to bed without his customary evening smoke. Mrs. Everington noticed it, but thought little about it. But when they returned to the regularity of their domestic habits and Mr. Everington still avoided the weed, his wife questioned him about it.

"I decided to quit," said Mr. Everington casually.

Mrs. Everington eyed him narrowly. "Tell me the truth, Meredith," she said. "Why did you quit?"

The lawyer burst out laughing. "It's that scamp, Joe," he said. "Somebody started him to smoking, and I had to swear off to get him to stop." He chuckled. "It may please you to know," he went on, "that Joe said he would have stopped smoking at a mere request from you—though *I* had to give up smoking myself before I could budge him."

"You men always say that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," retorted Mrs. Everington, "and as frequently refuse to believe what you say. I'm glad I didn't see Joe smoking, for I should surely have asked him to stop."

"To think that I needn't have sworn off at all," groaned Mr. Everington.

"It is a very proper punishment for your scepticism," rejoined Mrs. Everington with a smile. "And I am going to see that you live up to your bargain."

CHAPTER XX

LEARNING BY OBSERVATION

HOWEVER much Mr. Everington had done for Joe, his efforts heretofore were only a beginning. If possible, Joe now needed his Big Brother's assistance even more than he had the day they first met in Judge Wilmot's court. Freed from anxiety and responsibility for his mother and brother, feeling himself secure, in the knowledge cherished deep in his heart, that his Big Brother now stood between him and disaster, Joe's natural buoyancy of spirit more and more manifested itself. He became increasingly careless both of to-day and of to-morrow, yielding himself to the youthful enjoyment that his tiny heart craved, and of which he had had precious little since he left the *Mattie Ford*. Nor could he be blamed for demanding the heritage of childhood. He had not yet reached his thirteenth birthday. Yet this very tendency toward mischievous pranks, so long held in abeyance by his pressing need, now constituted a grave danger. Without careful guidance the lad might easily get into trouble.

Mr. Everington found the task that now confronted

him very different from his initial work of rescuing Joe from distress. It was a simple enough matter to open a hospital door and convey thither a sufferer, or to replace a suit of rags with decent clothing. But to put into the heart of this street arab the things that should be there was quite another task. The months on the street had marked Joe deeply. Neither new clothes nor a fresh vocabulary had really changed the lad. And under stress of excitement Joe's improved vernacular still disappeared as completely as his new garments had on the occasion of his first visit to the country club. Moreover, Joe's ambition was as yet too vague and nebulous to prove a handle by which his Big Brother could control him. Something must be put into his life to absorb his energies while his ambition was crystallizing, and his habits and manners must be entirely made over.

"How would you like to go to the theatre to-night?" Mr. Everington asked Joe one Monday evening, for this night in each week he now set aside for Joe.

"Bully!" answered Joe, his eyes dancing.

Mr. Everington glanced over the theatre advertisements and selected a play that he knew would please the lad. They walked up Broadway from Mr. Everington's office, for on these Monday nights Mr. Everington now worked late and had supper at a near-by res-

taurant—sometimes with Joe. By this arrangement he was able to do more work than he had ever done in the days before he knew Joe.

“Give me two orchestra seats about half-way front—on the aisle, if you have them,” said Mr. Everington upon their arrival at the theatre.

The man at the office found the desired seats. “How much?” asked Mr. Everington.

“Four dollars,” was the reply.

Mr. Everington peeled a bill from a roll that he held in his hand, then swept up tickets and change, and rejoined Joe, who had been watching him with wide open eyes.

Joe could not believe that he had heard aright. “Did he charge you four dollars for them tickets?” he asked anxiously.

“Yes, Joe,” was the reply.

“I thought you wasn’t watchin’,” said Joe. “He cheated you. Don’t you let him do you that way. Come on back and we’ll make him cough up.” And he grasped Mr. Everington’s coat as though to pull him to the box-office.

“It’s all right, Joe,” said Mr. Everington. “That’s the regular price.”

“The reg’lar price!” exclaimed Joe. “Four dollars!”

They passed inside the theatre. Joe went dumb

with amazement. In silence he feasted his eyes on the glory. The wonderful curtain of green velvet, hanging in gorgeous folds, and embroidered with gold, the carved columns of the proscenium arch, the beautiful boxes, rising tier on tier, wonderfully ornate, crested with gold, and hung with soft green draperies, formed a picture that held Joe in silent astonishment. Never had he seen the like. Suddenly he gave a low cry.

"Look!" he whispered, grasping his Big Brother's arm.

Mr. Everington did as directed, but saw nothing unusual. "What is it, Joe?" he asked.

"De angels!" said Joe. "Look at de angels," and he pointed with awed admiration at three beautiful women, clad in white evening gowns, who sat in one of the upper boxes.

"They are not angels," said Mr. Everington, trying in vain to repress a smile. "They are women." And seeing a look of doubt on Joe's face, he went on: "It's the clothes that make them look so nice, Joe. But that's the way most nice people dress when they go to the theatre."

Joe saw that it was true, for other women wearing wonderful gowns were filing in, and the men with them were also dressed in evening clothes. But the men did not astonish Joe. He had seen men so dressed walking along the streets.

Joe's eyes roamed from box to box, from orchestra to stage. When he emerged from under the overhanging balcony and saw the wonderfully ornate ceiling and the clustered lights, he gave a little cry of delight. Then he was silent again, too much overcome by the charm of the scene to utter a word. And so Big Brother and Little sat in silence until the curtain rose, the lights winked out, and attention was claimed by the doings on the stage.

All through the performance Joe sat in rapt attention, his interest never flagging. He applauded vigorously. Once he jumped to his feet and started to shout to one of the players. Mr. Everington quietly pulled him down into his seat but said nothing. He wanted Joe to learn by observation.

When the play was over, the two strolled up Broadway for a few blocks before saying good-night.

"Did you like it, Joe?" asked Mr. Everington.

"Did I?" said Joe, his eyes bright with happy recollection. "You bet your neck."

"You mean you were much pleased?" inquired Mr. Everington, apparently not understanding.

Joe blushed. "Sure," he said. "I liked it very much."

"You understood it all—heard it all?" asked Mr. Everington.

"Sure," said Joe. "Every word."

"That's good," said Mr. Everington, "but then of course you would. That was a nice audience ; and nice people are careful never to make a noise or do anything else to interfere with other people's pleasure."

Joe looked hard at the sidewalk for a time, then slyly raised his eyes to his Big Brother's face. Mr. Everington kept right on talking, apparently in ignorance of the quizzical glance focused on his face. But the next time the two went to the theatre together Joe sat quietly in his seat and was careful to make no noise or movement that would disturb others.

Just as they were saying good-night Mr. Everington asked, "Was it worth four dollars, Joe ? "

"You bet your—I mean it was," said Joe. "But it's an awful lot of money."

"It is, Joe," replied Mr. Everington. "But almost everything we buy that is worth while costs a lot of money. If a man wants to enjoy life, he's got to get a good education so that he can earn the money to buy all these things."

Not long afterward Mr. Everington proposed to Joe that they spend a Saturday afternoon at Bronx Park.

"Now I shall be taking you away from your work," he said, "and so I shall pay you for your time. I'm going to give you fifty cents, but you've got to earn it. You are to be the guide. Now you've got two days to get ready in. Go to the library near your lodging-

house and find out how to get to Bronx Park, and what to see there. Now be sure to prepare yourself, for if you fail in this business, I shall not dare trust you with more important things."

Fortunately Nature had endowed the librarian of the branch near Joe's lodging-house with great patience. Otherwise she must have been entirely worn out by her labors of the next two days. Joe thought that his Big Brother had never been to Bronx Park and that he wanted to see the most that could be seen in a single afternoon. Here was a chance to show his gratitude for his evening at the theatre. He pestered the librarian with a thousand questions as to what was to be seen in the great park and as to how to get there. The librarian got a map of the city, and together she and Joe traced out the routes until Joe knew them by heart. She got out every guide-book and other volume that contained any reference to this playground, and Joe pored through these with the utmost eagerness. When Saturday afternoon came Joe was brimming over with information about the park.

He met his Big Brother at the latter's office. "Here's a dollar, Joe," said Mr. Everington. "You are the guide, and you must pay all the bills and see that we get our money's worth."

Joe conducted his Big Brother to the Third Avenue elevated railway. As they trundled along the East Side

Joe kept up a continuous conversation about the wonders of Bronx Park. It seemed to him as though they would never get there. At the 149th Street station the conductor called out, "Change for the subway!"

"We could have come by the subway and changed to the elevated here," remarked Mr. Everington.

"We'd have landed at the same place," said Joe.

"We could have saved twenty minutes by the subway."

"We've got all the afternoon," said Joe.

"All right, you are the guide," said the lawyer smiling.

They reached the park and went at once to the great hothouses. Never before had Joe seen anything like them. He was lost in wonder as they strolled along the fragrant aisles, between palm and fern, through rows of orchids and exotics, and past the commoner flowers of our own land banked in great masses, brightening the way with their gay colors, and scenting the air to the very top of the great glass dome.

"I didn't know there was such a place in all the world," gasped Joe when he had recovered from his amazement sufficiently to speak.

They went on from place to place, visiting the museum, the hemlock grove and the Lorillard mansion, as the guide-books directed. Joe was not so much interested in these things, for he was eager to get to the

zoo. But when they came to the old-fashioned garden where had been Pierre Lorillard's famous "acre of roses," Joe's delight knew no bounds. Nothing in the world pleased him more than flowers. They roamed from one flower-bed to another, finding variety after variety of old-fashioned blossoms; and when Joe came across blooms like those he had known in his old home in Alabama, his cup of happiness ran over.

At the entrance to the zoölogical park, they found on sale books describing the animals. Joe looked at them longingly.

"Shall we buy one?" he asked with hopeful timidity.

"You are the guide," said Mr. Everington. "You know we came here to learn something about these animals. If you think it worth while buy one."

"They tell all about the animals," said Joe, who had been looking them over longingly. "I think that I'll buy one." He looked questioningly at Mr. Everington as he laid down the price and picked up the book, but the latter gave no indication of whether or not he approved the purchase.

From enclosure to enclosure they went swiftly, Joe reading the descriptions of the various animals. Presently a man came up to them.

"Pardon me," he said, "but I've been trying for ten minutes to find out what kind of an animal this is. I

see you have a guide-book. Would you be good enough to tell me?"

Joe gave him the desired information.

"Well, what do you think about the book now?" inquired Mr. Everington. "Was it worth while getting it?"

"Sure," said Joe.

"Joe," said Mr. Everington, "it's always worth while to spend money if it will help you save time. Some day you will learn that time is money."

They went on through the lion house, the monkey house, the elephant house, past the bear dens, and the other enclosures. But before they had visited all the cages, the hour for closing came, and they had to leave the park. The prairie-dogs, which Joe wanted especially to see, they missed, and the camels and giraffes. Joe was keenly disappointed.

"If we only had twenty minutes more," he sighed, "we could see everything."

"You could have had twenty minutes more," replied Mr. Everington, "if you had taken the subway instead of the elevated." Joe made no reply; but he did not forget the lesson.

Some weeks later Mr. Everington said to Joe, "Have you ever been to the Hippodrome?"

"No," replied Joe.

"Well, here's two dollars." Joe's face lighted up

with joy. Like every child he had heard of that wonderful show house. "I want Helen to see this show," said Mr. Everington, "but I haven't time to take her. You take her in my place. Buy your tickets early, or you may not be able to get good seats."

The light fled from Joe's face. He handed the money back. "I couldn't," he rejoined. "All the guys at the lodging-house would kid the life out of me for goin' with a skoit."

Mr. Everington was astonished, but he said merely, "I'm sorry, Joe. You see, I didn't understand. Among my friends all the boys and men think it is an honor to escort a girl or woman. Don't you remember how proud the men looked at the theatre? But I don't want you to do anything that will make you feel bad." He pocketed the money and said no more about the matter.

Some weeks later Joe came to him, and rather shamefacedly announced that he would be glad to take his sister to the Hippodrome if Mr. Everington still cared to send her.

"All right, Joe," smiled Mr. Everington. "Here's the two dollars."

"I thought it all over," said Joe, "and say—if any of those guys say anything to me, I'll knock his block off."

If Joe could have seen the manly little figure that

escorted Helen up the aisle of the Hippodrome the next Saturday afternoon he would never have believed it was himself. The beautiful playhouse, the well-bred audience, the courtesy of men who had brought their wives or sweethearts, all made an indelible impression on Joe. Never before had he paid any attention to the way "nice" men treated women. Now he understood what Mr. Everington meant. The seed of chivalry took root in his heart. And Joe marched up the aisle with his sister as though it was the proudest moment of his life. Thus little by little did Mr. Everington plant in Joe's soul the things that were lacking there. Thus were forged strong links in the chain of Joe's character.

CHAPTER XXI

JOE AND THE GANG

AFTER all, a chain is no stronger than its weakest link; and Joe's chain still contained many a feeble ring. His daily associations were in a way demoralizing. The boys at the lodging-house were rough, crude little sons of toil. They were utterly lacking in refinement. Their speech and manners were coarse and vulgar. Their view of the world was sordid. They pulled Joe one way, while Mr. Everington pulled the other. The saving feature of the situation was the fact that all had to work for their living. That gave them little time to foregather.

But on holidays and Sundays, if they were not at work, the lodging-house boys often fared forth in groups in search of diversion. Joe naturally flocked with the youngsters of his own size, of whom there were several; and though this group was neither vicious nor criminal, it was probably the most mischievous coterie at the lodging-house. Anything that offered sport, be it a trick on pedestrians or tantalizing watchmen, was game for this group. As the youngsters mingled freely with the little tenement dwellers in the

neighborhood, they became unconsciously a part of a gang.

On the Fourth of July Joe and his young associates sallied forth in quest of fun and excitement. In one of the public squares on the lower West Side they came upon a patriotic celebration. A stand had been erected, bunting was flying, and a brass band was playing national airs. The group gravitated to the little park. The musicians were Germans, rotund and bewhiskered, and red in the face. They looked so much like the caricatures of the German so often seen in cheap theatres, that the little gangsters began to twit them at once.

“Hey, Dutchy!” yelled one of them. “You’ll blow up if you don’t look out.”

The red-faced tooter on the horn at whom these words were hurled was so fat and puffy, and his face, like a soap-bubble, was so distended that he did indeed look as though he might burst at any moment. Those who heard the gibe began to laugh. Thus encouraged, the youngsters pushed the attack.

“Stick a pin in him and see him bust!” shouted another of the youngsters.

The tormented musician was sensitive about his appearance. He glared savagely at the boys, but kept on tooting his horn. During a lull in the music he was indiscreet enough to answer the attack. That

showed the gang that their gibes had struck home. They redoubled their efforts.

"Look at de prize pig blowin' a horn," sang out another.

By this time everybody within ear-shot was laughing and the band was becoming confused. Suddenly Joe's eyes began to twinkle.

"Come on," he said to a comrade ; "I just thought of something."

The two raced away toward the water-front and soon returned with their pockets bulging. They passed among their fellows and pressed something into the hand of each. The little gangsters scattered and worked their way close up around the stand. When the band began to play again, each youngster produced a lemon, bit off an end, and began to suck it. Soon the air was redolent of the acid odor. Mouths began to water. The musicians glared angrily but went on tooting. A sustained note from the fat man's bass horn ended in a sudden quaver. A cornet player got off the key. The trombone was out of tune. The music became one great discord. One after another the players took their instruments from their lips and swallowed or spat. The gangsters kept on sucking their lemons, and even tearing them open to eat the flesh—and add to the smell. The band glared at them, angry and impotent. The crowd was roaring with laughter. The

fat blower on the bass horn laid his instrument down, waddled off the platform, and made for the nearest offender. Instantly the music ceased. The entire German band plunged from the platform, a perfect Niagara of fat men, and made after the young gangsters who were now in full flight, while the crowd roared advice and ironically applauded their vain attempts to overtake their agile tormentors. The little gangsters headed for the water-front and soon disappeared from sight.

They went by the coal pier. There lay the *Mattie Ford*, but Hawkins was nowhere visible. Joe's conscience began to prick him, but he went on, thinking that he would not take part in any further mischief. Alas for Joe's resolution! The gang had gone no further than the garbage dump when Joe spied a mouse scuttling into a tin can. There wasn't anything wrong in catching a mouse, he said to himself. He slipped up and snapped down the gaping cover of the can. He had the mouse captive. The gang gathered about him and peered through the cut in the cover at the little prisoner within.

"What'll we do with him?" asked one.

"Let's paint him," sang out another, as his eye fell on an old paint pot that still held some red paint in the bottom.

Several ineffectual methods were tried. Then Joe

suddenly pried up the lid of the can and dumped the mouse into the paint pot. The little creature could not get out, and as it tore around inside the can, it got redder and redder. Meantime the boys walked over to Broadway, where a procession was to pass. Here were great crowds and the little gangsters stopped. They had found a use for their red mouse. Joe suddenly catapulted the creature from the can to the sidewalk and stood by to await results.

The mouse was so bedraggled with paint and so befuddled by its journey in the can and its violent drop to the sidewalk, that it made no attempt to run, but at first lay still. Then it sat up on its haunches and stared about. At this juncture it was espied by an Irishman who had been celebrating Independence Day since the evening before. He laid a trembling hand on the man who stood nearest to him.

"Me frind," he said, "aare yez sober?"

"As sober as the statue o' liberty," rejoined the other.

"Is yer oisoight good, me frind?"

"I can see a dollar bill a mile off," was the reply.

"Thin see if yez can see a mouse about foive feet away," and he drew the man about.

"I do," said the man, too much astonished at what he saw for further elaboration of speech.

"An' phwat color moight it be?" asked Pat.

"It's a red mouse," said the man.

Pat wiped his forehead. "Now may the saints be praised," he said. "Oi thought Oi had 'em again."

This bit of dialogue attracted attention to the mouse, which was now somewhat recovered. It started to run, but, apparently still dizzy, scooted around in a circle. A red mouse making circles was a novelty even for Broadway. The onlookers moved back from the curb and crowded about the mouse. Expressions of wonder arose. Those behind pressed forward to see what was doing. Presently the crowd was pushing in from all sides. A woman caught sight of the little creature and screamed long and lustily. In an instant the thoroughfare was in a turmoil. Every one thought that a woman was being robbed or insulted. Strong men pushed through the crowd jabbing their elbows right and left. Those jabbed took offense. In a minute half a dozen fights were raging and Broadway was in uproar. The mounted police came charging up and forced their horses into the crowd. The patrolmen on foot fought their way toward the disturbance, pushing and battering those who hindered them. Broadway was on the verge of a riot. Meantime the youthful gangsters had fled to more healthful quarters, and the innocent mouse had scuttled into a sewer opening.

Joe and his comrades, safe around a corner, were roaring with laughter over their escapade, when a

gong was heard clanging and an ambulance drove by. Joe looked at it quizzically. When it returned a few minutes later, bearing a stiff and bleeding victim of their joke, the laughter fled from Joe's lips. Bitterly he reproached himself. It cut him to the quick to think what his Big Brother would say when he learned of the day's doings. But like many another offender, Joe did not immediately separate himself from evil associations. All the band were sobered now, and Joe continued with them. And so once more he unwittingly got into difficulty.

Throughout the day there was no further attempt at mischief, but at night, while abroad to view the fireworks, the lodging-house lads fell in with some of their tenement house friends. Their number grew until they had a gang of fully a hundred boys. They were heading for the water-front where an unobstructed view could be had of the river shores and the fireworks both in New Jersey and in Manhattan. It seemed as though fate were continually calling Joe back to the water-front where he was forever getting into trouble. Before Joe knew what was happening, he found himself in a gang fight.

His crowd had bumped into the Hudson Dusters, a juvenile gang that had long been one of the terrors of the lower West Side of Manhattan. Between the Dusters and the tenement house lads in Joe's band

raged an inextinguishable feud. No sooner had the two companies come together than there was a lively scrimmage. It was a case of fight or take a whipping, and Joe cast prudence to the winds and sailed in with both fists. Fortunately neither gang was armed, so no one was seriously hurt. After the first clash, the combatants drew apart, seeking for more effective weapons than bare knuckles. They searched the ash cans, took toll of the garbage pails, and filled their pockets with every missile they could find. Then they returned to the attack.

Stones began to fly, and old bottles, and bits of metal, and decaying vegetables. Fusillades of missiles filled the street. The noise of battle rent the air. Window lights were broken, woodwork scarred and mutilated, and not a few pedestrians struck. A mail-carrier, collecting letters, was cut by a flying bottle. He stepped to a telephone and called for the police. Meanwhile the gangsters fought on, ignorant of the vengeance that was preparing for them.

Joe knew well that he had no business in this affray, but he had been caught unawares, and being in, he resolved to do what Polonius advised—bear it out. Perhaps he was the more inclined thereto from the fact that his left eye was swollen and rapidly turning black. He was pegging away at the enemy from the partial protection of a projecting saloon side door

when a bluecoat slipped around the corner behind him. Joe did not observe him. But the bluecoat saw Joe. Indeed no one could have failed to notice Joe. He stood with the tin cover of an old wash-boiler held in his left hand, like a gladiator's shield, while in his right hand he carried a catsup bottle. As he drew back his arm to throw, he saw the advancing policeman out of the corner of his eye. Catsup bottle and tin shield fell to the sidewalk with a clang.

"Cheese it, de cops!" called Joe, the while he darted around the corner. But the policeman was close at his heels, and in another instant Joe was once more in the hands of the law.

Bitterly he wept that night, when they put him to bed at the Children's Society. But the fear that wet his eyes had in it no thought of what might happen to Joe Wainright. He was thinking only of his Big Brother, and the fact that he had betrayed his benefactor's trust in him. And when some of his fellow unfortunates twitted him with cowardice, not understanding the cause of his tears, Joe raged through the dormitory as fiery as a bobcat, daring his tormentors to measure punches with him.

CHAPTER XXII

FORGIVEN

THE hours that passed before Joe's arraignment again in Judge Wilmot's court were hours of actual torture to Joe. Had he been mentally dull, or of a less sensitive nature, he might have been stolid enough in his consideration of his situation. But the very keenness and sensitiveness that made him so appreciative of his Big Brother's kindnesses now caused him immeasurable grief. His feelings were poignant. His regret stabbed him mercilessly. He had betrayed his Big Brother's confidence. He had repaid his kindnesses by doing that which would cause him grief. That was the burden of Joe's thoughts. Never a whimper did he waste on himself. He hardly thought about Joe Wainright, except as the instrument of the harm that he thought had come to Mr. Everington. In fact he did not care what became of Joe Wainright. He had taken care of himself too long to be worried over any such trivial matter. But over and over in his mind the thought recurred that he had brought sorrow to his Big Brother.

Of course he should be roundly scolded by both the

Judge and Mr. Everington. Well, let them scold. He deserved it. The scolding was not what mattered. Behind the scolding would be lost faith. No more could his Big Brother feel confidence in him ; no more could he trust him. He had forfeited the right to be trusted. And if his Big Brother had lost faith in him, Joe could no more endure to see his Big Brother. He must go away, he must run off, and hide himself so that his Big Brother should never see him again. That would be easy, for, of course, his Big Brother would make no attempt to find him. Probably he would feel relieved to find Joe had gone. For Joe could not fancy himself as ever caring for an ingrate, and he had only his own mind by which to measure Mr. Everington's.

It was settled. He would run away as soon as he was free. He began to plan his escape, where he should go, what he should do, how he should hide if—if they *should* hunt for him. For in his heart lurked the unacknowledged hope that his Big Brother would look for him. Perhaps the Judge would let him go with a reprimand. He would try to get off that way. Then he could hurry away and disappear before ever his Big Brother heard of his difficulty. He should not have to face his Big Brother and hear the words of scorn and contempt that he knew would be his just due.

Thus, after hours of mental struggle, during which he fiercely and resolutely crushed down the desire that

lurked in the back of his heart to go to his Big Brother on his knees and beg for one more chance, he set his face like a flint toward the accomplishment of his purpose—to get free and be off before he had to face the man whose kindness he had repaid with betrayal and disgrace. And so he entered the court-room.

There to his utter consternation and undoing, sitting beside the Judge where first he had seen him, sat Meredith Everington. But his face was very different now. His expression was utterly unlike that with which he had surveyed this little court on the day of his first visit. Now his countenance betrayed a feeling of interest and kindliness. And this in itself upset all Joe's resolutions. Had he seen the hard look of scorn he had expected his Big Brother to wear, he could have steeled his heart and borne up. But the affectionate glance that Mr. Everington turned on him completely broke him down. In an instant the tears were glistening on his cheeks. To Mr. Everington those tear-drops were as welcome as the first flowers of spring. Knowing Joe's strong nature, he had feared from the moment that Judge Wilmot telephoned him about Joe that he might find his Little Brother sulky and rebellious. But he had not reckoned on Joe's deep affection for him. In fact he did not really know the depth of the lad's love for him. But the glistening tear-drops reassured him instantly. He flashed a swift smile at Joe.

"Let me take him inside and talk to him," he said, turning to Judge Wilmot. "This is no place to deal with such a sensitive little fellow as Joe."

Big Brother and Little met a moment later in the solitude of the Judge's chambers. Joe could still hardly credit his senses. Mr. Everington must be angry. And when the latter came forward with outstretched hand and said with a smile, "I'm glad to see you, Joe," the little offender was shocked into his old habit of speech and blurted out, "The hell you are!"

"I shall not be if you don't stop using such language," said Mr. Everington, but his tone was all gentleness.

Joe was completely broken up. He started a tearful recital of his misdeeds and Mr. Everington listened until he understood thoroughly why Joe was in the toils. Then he thought Joe had done penance enough. He knew that the lad's own heart would do more to keep him straight in future than any amount of admonition, so he merely said, "Well, I'm glad to know how it happened. But I haven't time to talk any longer, Joe. I'll ask Judge Wilmot to discharge you, and you come to my office at five. We are going to have dinner at home to-night, you and I."

Joe could not believe his ears. This was the thing Mr. Everington had so often spoken of, this was the prize Joe had been struggling for—a visit to his Big

Brother's house. He was actually going home with this great lawyer, going to eat at his table, to talk with his pretty wife, to see his elegant mansion. And he was going to do it now—after he had done wrong. Joe couldn't believe it.

“Do you mean it?” he cried.

“Certainly,” rejoined Mr. Everington.

“On the level? Cross your heart?”

“Most assuredly, Joe. Be at my office at five sharp. And don't disappoint me. Good-bye.” And he left Joe in a shower of happy tears.

“Don't disappoint me!” As though he could be either absent or late! This was the thing he had looked forward to for weeks. And after Judge Wilmot had discharged him, with a kindly reprimand, he hastened to his usual stand to sell his papers; but all day long he kept running out into the middle of the street and looking up at the great clock on the Metropolitan tower to see if it was yet time to go to Mr. Everington's office. He started for lower Broadway at two o'clock and spent two good hours impatiently wandering about the neighborhood of the tall building in which his Big Brother had his offices.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE STORY OF MR. EVERINGTON'S LIFE

JOE'S high spirits underwent a sudden eclipse the moment he set foot in Mr. Everington's home. The liveried servant at the door, who obsequiously took his cap, confused him, and the elegance of the place served to embarrass him still further. Once, in those distant days in Alabama, Joe had been inside the home of a great planter ; and in his imagination he had pictured his Big Brother's house as being not unlike that old plantation home, though he thought it might perhaps be finer. But he was utterly unprepared for the elegance and beauty that greeted him. The wonderful hangings and paintings on the walls, the beautiful furniture, the marvelous floor-coverings, the general air of luxury that pervaded the entire establishment, all served to abash Joe. He was dumb with amazement. He felt out of place.

As his self-possession left him, there came in its place a consciousness of awkwardness and a fear that he would commit some blunder. And as dinner proceeded, he became increasingly aware that his manners were rude. It was the awakening of social conscious-

ness in Joe. Once his Big Brother had given him as a good rule of conduct the injunction, "When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do." He thought of that now, and though he was utterly confused by the rapidly appearing courses of food and the array of knives, forks, and spoons at his place, he stealthily watched his hosts and did the best he could to imitate them, dropping his fork as seldom as possible, and trying to make intelligible replies to the remarks addressed to him.

Little by little his embarrassment wore off. Mrs. Everington was very gracious to Joe. Both she and her husband did their best to put him at his ease; and his diffidence would have worn off immediately had it not been for the servants. Their stares confused him. Mrs. Everington rightly divined the cause of Joe's continued discomfiture, and when the last bit of food had been brought in, she ordered the servants to leave the room. Very soon thereafter Joe's spirits came out from under the eclipse, and he was once more his usual smiling self—but with this difference: he had accumulated the rudiments of good table manners. For Joe never let anything escape his eye. By the time the three left the dinner table, Joe was really happy.

As they entered the library Joe gave a little cry of delight. Being mentally acute, Joe had long ago learned to like books. In them he found delights that

were denied him elsewhere. From this moment he loved books. Before him he saw row upon row of books, making not merely the appeal that always goes with assembled volumes, but the appeal of a library set in alluring surroundings. The walls of the room were of a soft brown tint, with which the simple hangings were in perfect harmony. The few pictures blended with their background. Even the hardwood floor, the rich rugs, and the inviting fireplace, now dark, added to the harmonies of color. There was nothing that startled the eye or compelled attention. Only the books stood forth. And to these was added the sense of charm and comfort lent by the setting. There was some indefinable quality about this room that filled the heart with a pleasant glow like old wine.

Now utterly lost to self, Joe wandered up and down the long rows of books. Mr. Everington was beside him, while Mrs. Everington sat by the heavy oak table knitting in the soft glow of a brownish-yellow reading lamp. To Joe's surprise he found many books that he had read and liked—"Kidnapped," and "Treasure Island," and "Robinson Crusoe," and others—and the knowledge that Mr. Everington also loved these books was to Joe another bond of sympathy between himself and his Big Brother.

When the two had tired of looking at books, they drew some low chairs up beside the table, and sitting

there face to face in the lamplight, the one told, the other heard, a story that neither ever forgot.

“Over in the hills of Essex County, a dozen miles from New York,” said Mr. Everington, “there was a lad of your age, Joe, who lived with his father on a worn-out farm. His father was a poor farmer. He did not like farming. He had become a farmer because he had inherited the farm from his father, and having always lived on a farm, he did not know any other way to earn a living. So he lived all his life on the worn-out farm, which gradually grew poorer and poorer, until at last it would produce almost nothing. Yet he kept on farming it, for it was the only way he had to get any food at all. And by the time this little boy I am going to tell you about was as old as you are, his father was worn out and the boy himself had to do most of the work. It looked as though the boy would have to stay on the farm and wear his life out, too, working himself to death merely to get enough food to eat. You know what that means, don’t you, Joe?”

Without pausing for a reply, Mr. Everington went on, bending forward with his elbows on his knees, and his eyes level with Joe’s.

“It was a pretty dreary prospect for this little boy. He wanted books to read; he wanted to go to the theatre he had heard about; he wanted nice clothes; he wanted to live in a comfortable house—he wanted

lots of things, but there was no money for any of them. He was lucky if he got enough to eat. And it looked as though he would have to stay on that farm for life. It was pretty hard, Joe, wasn't it? Almost as bad as having to spend your life on a coal barge."

Joe started to say something, but Mr. Everington silenced him with a gesture, and went on, "But one day something happened. There was a big crop on the early fall apple-trees that September, and the little boy's father, thinking he could get some cash, filled three barrels and sent the little boy to New York with them. The father was not well enough to go himself.

"It was a pretty big thing for a little boy to drive all the way to the city and sell those apples, but he did it. He was so eager to see the great city that he didn't care if his old wagon did rattle and his horse look as though it would die in the shafts. He was too happy to hear the laughter his appearance aroused. He drove on and on and got aboard a ferry-boat and went across the river, landing in New York on the water-front, just as you did, Joe, and looking just as ragged, and feeling just as bad in his heart as you did. But he found the market and sold his apples.

"And all the while his heart was crying out for freedom, just as yours did, Joe. He didn't want to go back to that farm. He hated it just as much as you hated the *Mattie Ford*. But he had to go back be-

cause he had the horse with him, and without the horse his father and mother would have starved. So he went back. But before he went, he asked a marketman for a job. The marketman offered him two dollars a week. You know how little that is, Joe, but it seemed like a great sum to the little boy. His father didn't get two dollars in cash in a month.

"That fall, when all the work was done, the little boy left home and walked to New York. The marketman had died, and the boy hadn't a cent. He had to walk the street all night and go hungry. But next day he got a job. The pay was just the same as he had been offered by the marketman—two dollars a week. You know what it is like to live in New York on two dollars a week, Joe."

Joe nodded his head.

"Well, this little boy did it for nearly a year. Then he got a better job which paid him three dollars, and after a time he got four. But there wasn't any prospect of advancement in that job, and he looked about for another. Pretty soon he got a place as office boy in a lawyer's office. He liked this. There were books to read, even if they were law books, and there was a chance to learn and get ahead. So the little boy, who was getting to be a big boy now, began to read the law books when he had time, and to go to the libraries and read other books, and then he began to attend

night school. When his employer saw that he was ambitious, he helped the boy along. After a time the boy became a clerk. He was admitted to the bar. And then he set up an office for himself. Whose name do you think was on his sign?"

A great light came into Joe's eyes. "It was yours," he said eagerly.

"It was, Joe."

"And did you come to New York a poor boy just like me?" demanded Joe incredulously.

"Yes, Joe."

"And didn't you have nobody to help you either?"

"No, Joe, not for a long time, not until I worked in the law office."

For a time there was silence. Joe was contrasting the Meredith Everington he knew with the Meredith Everington he had just heard about. "Did you do it all yourself?" he asked suddenly, forgetful that his thoughts were not visible to others.

But Mr. Everington understood. "Yes, Joe," he said.

Again Joe was silent. Suddenly he piped out, "Did you have to have working papers before you got a job?" And immediately afterward he asked, "How long did it take you, Mr. Everington?"

"It was forty years ago to-day that I came to New York," replied Mr. Everington. "That is why I

asked you to dinner, Joe. I'm celebrating the anniversary."

Joe's face fell. "Forty years!" he repeated. "Forty years!"

"Oh, it didn't take me forty years to succeed, Joe," interrupted Mr. Everington with a laugh. "Before I had been here ten years I was earning more money than I ever knew existed when I left the farm."

"How'd you do it?" demanded Joe.

"By hard work, Joe. I made up my mind as to what I wanted to do and then stuck to it. There isn't anything wonderful about it. Lots of men have done the same thing. Anybody can win out, if he will work hard and stick to his purpose."

"And own a house like this," queried Joe, his eyes ablaze, "and as many books as that?" and he pointed to the shelves behind him.

"Yes, Joe," smiled Mr. Everington, "just as fine a house and even more books if he wants them."

Joe had not been the only interested listener. Not a word had escaped Mrs. Everington as she sat with flying fingers, apparently engrossed in knitting, but really wrapt up in the story of her husband's life. It was as much news to her as it was to Joe. Vaguely she knew that her husband had been poor and that he had worked his way up to his present position by untold labors. But long before she knew her husband,

the worn-out farmer father and mother in Essex County had been laid to rest, and the little farm sold. And as Mr. Everington was an only child, there was nothing left in his life to connect him with the humble home in the Jersey hills—nothing except memories, that had long been allowed to lie dormant.

Of those early years of privation and hardship Mrs. Everington knew practically nothing. She had come into Mr. Everington's life at a time when he was rich and successful. Being herself of a wealthy family, she had felt little interest in her husband's obscure past, and he had told her little concerning it. So the tale of those youthful struggles came to her ear as freshly as they did to Joe's.

At heart she was good and her love for her husband was genuine. She was as much a victim of circumstances as Joe. Her indifference to the lowly was due to no hardness of heart, but to her youthful upbringing. Rags and filth were repulsive to her and she had never been taught to be considerate of those less fortunate than herself. To her the poor had ever been as an alien race. But ever since Joe had brought the roses to her cheeks at the ferry that afternoon with his naive comment on her beauty, her human sympathies had been growing. Now, after Joe had said good-night, she came to where her husband had seated himself in an easy chair, laid her hand affectionately

on his shoulder, and said in a low, gentle voice, "Meredith, I am so sorry that I tried to keep you from helping Joe. I did not understand. I did not know that you had had trouble like Joe's. You owed it to yourself to help Joe. You will forgive me, won't you?"

Long after Mr. Everington lovingly kissed his wife in answer, he sat in his library alone, his elbows on his knees, his face pillowed in his hands, staring into the shadows. He was living over again, as he had not done these many years past, those youthful days of hardship and struggle. He remembered how bitter the fight had been. He recalled how he had yearned for sympathy, for friendship, for the love of some one, any one, so that he could feel that some human being cared for him. He remembered his gratitude to his lawyer employer for his friendly interest and help. How much it had meant to him. Ah, how much! And it had come at a time when he needed help most. And as he rose and left the room, he muttered to himself, "To think that I should ever have forgotten."

CHAPTER XXIV

CONCERNING A YELLOW DOG

FOR the next few days Joe's head was in a whirl. He went about like one in a dream. Mr. Everington's carefully planned object-lesson had done its work. Joe was thinking about the future—a future still vague and nebulous, but a future that had suddenly taken on a rosy tint. He kept repeating over and over in his mind his Big Brother's declaration that "Anybody can win out if he will work hard and stick to his purpose."

When he thought of Mr. Everington it all seemed easy. But when he thought of Joe Wainright, the task seemed hard enough, and he was assailed by doubts and fears. So his moods alternated. Now he was downcast, now raised up. The memory of his months of struggle always left him feeling despondent. The thought of his Big Brother as inevitably cheered him. Mr. Everington had said it could be done—and he had the proof. He had the house and the books. But how had he gotten them?

That query made Joe gloomy for long periods, for he remembered well that Mr. Everington had said to him,

"I made up my mind as to what I wanted to do and then I stuck to it." Joe's trouble was that he could not make up his mind as to what he wanted to do. The divine call to labor had not yet reached him. He was ready enough to work. Indeed the little philosopher had more than once said to himself, "We've got to work anyhow, so why not work a little harder and get somewhere?" The difficulty was that he felt no desire for any one kind of labor in preference to any other.

Fortunately Joe had long ago come to appreciate the value of education, and he resolved that although he could not now make choice of a calling, he would at least study hard in school. The fall term would open in a few days, and henceforth he would be a full time pupil. His fourteenth birthday would come to him during the winter, but as he was still a little behind in his studies, because of the months he had spent on the streets, he would have to continue at school for a time after his birthday. But he hoped to get his working papers by spring and find a job.

As soon as he earned enough, he could bring his mother from the hospital, and with Henry and Helen they would have a home again, just as they had in Alabama. Joe's mother had recently been sent to a sanitarium in the Adirondacks, so he no longer saw her; but he got occasional letters from her and she was

fast getting well. Henry he saw at intervals, and the lad was stronger and healthier looking than he had been before.

Helen was doing well. Twice she had been promoted, and now she was getting eight dollars a week. If Joe could earn four or five, their combined earnings would support the home they both so much yearned for. Joe saw Helen at frequent intervals and always they talked about the day when they should all be together again. Had it not been for Helen, the flame of Joe's ambition to make a home for his mother might have burned out during those hard months in the streets, but Helen had been as a lodestar to him, and Joe's purpose had grown stronger rather than become weaker.

But since his visit to the home of his Big Brother, Joe's purpose was beginning to alter very greatly. He did not for an instant abandon the idea of a simple little home where the family could be reunited, but he was beginning to see beyond this first home and to hope for something far different. Assuredly Mr. Everington had been successful in his plan to rouse Joe's ambition.

As Joe called his papers and dodged among the shifting crowd these September days, his mind was busy with the future. Mechanically he cried out the headlines, and more than once he drew execrations upon his

head by carelessly bumping into pedestrians or treading on tender feet. Always there was in his mind the little home of the immediate future and behind that stood a greater house, filmy and indistinct in all particulars except as to the library. That was a soft brown room, with long rows of books, an inviting fireplace, and a brownish-yellow reading lamp on a heavy oak table. That was what Joe saw when his vision was rosy; and when it was dark he saw nothing but a cloud.

He was mentally looking at this soft brown reading-room one afternoon, mechanically handing out his papers, while watching his mother knit by the heavy oak table, while Henry played at jackstraws on the floor, and Helen read a book, when he was suddenly shocked into consciousness of time and place by the distressed yelping of a dog. For all dumb animals Joe had nothing in his heart but kindness. Not far up the street—almost where he had been arrested for defending Henry, in fact—he saw a ring of boys. From that ring came the yelps. Joe knew the little gangsters were torturing a dog. His head went hot and his eyes blazed. He handed his papers to a fellow newsy and sped up the avenue to the little group on the sidewalk. There he saw two boys on their knees trying to tie a can to a yellow dog's tail, while the group around them looked on and applauded. Joe shouldered his way through the ring.

"Whatcha doin' with that dog?" he demanded fiercely.

"Watch a bit and you'll see," answered one of the boys.

"I've seen enough," responded Joe. "Cut it out."

The lad sprang to his feet. He was half a head taller than Joe. "You must be lookin' for trouble," he said with a sneer.

"You ain't a-goin' to tie that can to his tail," retorted Joe.

"I don't see nobody that can stop me."

"Take the string off," cried Joe, a fierce light in his eyes.

"You're pretty fresh," was the retort. "Beat it before I bust your eye."

Joe saw he had to fight. He waited for no further parley. Quick as a flash he struck out, hitting the lad square on the nose. The blood spurted and the boy jumped away, stumbling over the dog, and falling backward across his companion who was still busily trying to get the string around the squirming animal's tail. He bumped his head hard and made no effort to renew the fight. But the second boy sprang up and came at Joe like a whirlwind. All Joe's fighting instincts were roused. He met the rush firmly, and although this boy, too, was taller than himself he stood his ground and returned blow for blow. The

dog, finding itself suddenly free, tried to break through the circle of boys, but failing, crouched down behind Joe, as though it knew Joe was its one friend. So matters stood, with Joe and his antagonist stubbornly exchanging punch for punch and neither yielding an inch, when the familiar cry went up, "Cheese it, de cop."

Every lad in the group but Joe took to his heels. Joe bent over to see if the little dog was hurt. He was conscious of no wrong-doing and he did not intend to run when he was innocent. When the policeman arrived, Joe was on one knee caressing the dog. He looked up at the patrolman with a smile. It was the same policeman that had arrested him almost two years before. But Joe had grown so that the patrolman did not recognize him.

"Come on," said the bluecoat gruffly, catching Joe by the shoulder.

"What for?" asked Joe, holding back.

"You know very well what for, you little devil—for fighting."

"I did it to save this dog," explained Joe. "They were going to tie a tin can on his tail."

"Tell it to the lieutenant," said the policeman. "Come on." And he began to drag Joe away.

Joe knew the futility of either pleas or arguments. He knew there was only one power that could get him

free. "Will you let me telephone my Big Brother?" he asked.

"Your big brother can't help you," retorted the policeman.

"He did the other time you pinched me," answered Joe.

The policeman stopped and took a good look at Joe. The face began to seem familiar to him. "What's your name?" he asked.

"Joe Wainright," was the reply.

"No Wainright ever got one of my prisoners off," said the policeman.

"But that ain't my Big Brother's name," urged Joe. And seeing the policeman's look of astonishment, he added, "He ain't really my brother. He just calls himself that."

"I see," said the bluecoat. "One of those missionary guys. What's his name?"

"It's Everington," said Joe.

The policeman stopped in his tracks. "Are you that kid?" he asked in astonishment.

"Sure," said Joe. "I want to telephone Mr. Everington."

The bluecoat paid no heed to the request. "Did you say you were fighting for this dog?" he asked, pointing to the little animal which had followed Joe.

"That's what I have been tryin' to make you under-

stand," said Joe. "They was goin' to tie a tin can on his tail."

"Then it's the other little devils that ought to be arrested," said the policeman.

"Sure," said Joe.

"Well, I'll let you go," said the bluecoat. "Now beat it. And don't you dare get into any more fights."

Joe went back to his work, and the yellow dog followed at his heels. All of the afternoon the little dog squatted near Joe, and when supper-time came, followed Joe and his newsboy friend to the lodging-house.

"Where can we put him?" asked Joe.

"Are you goin' to keep him?" asked the other newsy.

"Sure," said Joe.

"Where?"

"That's what I'm askin' you about. I don't know. But anyhow I'll take him to bed with me to-night and try to find a place for him to-morrow."

"It's against the rules," said the newsy.

"But he's got to have some place to sleep," retorted Joe, "and he'll get lost again if I leave him out in the street."

"You ain't going to bring him to supper, is you?" asked the newsy.

"No," said Joe. "They'd see him in there."

"Then what is you goin' to do?"

"I'll tell you what," said Joe, a plan suddenly coming into his mind. "You go in and eat and I'll stay with the dog. And when you get through, you come on out and keep him while I eat. When it's bedtime I'll take him up-stairs with me."

Everything worked right. The little chums ate separately, and when the hour for sleep had come, Joe tucked the mongrel under his coat.

"Don't you say a word," he whispered to the dog, and the little beast was as quiet as though it understood. Five minutes later Joe was in bed with the mongrel in his arms, its head just showing on the pillow beside Joe's.

Some of the older lads at the lodging-house were always up early in the morning to handle the first editions of the newspapers. One of these, dressing next morning, espied the black nose and yellow face peeping out of Joe's cot. "Look at de mutt," he said to another. Going down-stairs he said to the clerk, "Dere's a kid up-stairs sleeping with a ki-yi. It's dat little Wainright kid."

The clerk wrathfully mounted to the dormitory and awoke Joe from a pleasant dream. He unceremoniously yanked the dog from under the covers, and gave the startled lad a sharp reprimand. Then he took the

yelping mongrel by the back of the neck and started down-stairs.

Joe jumped out of bed, his eyes ablaze. "Stop that," he commanded. "That's my dog."

The clerk made no pause, and the dog continued to yelp shrilly. Joe started to dress, but seeing that he would be too late, he dashed, barefooted and still in his nightshirt, after the retreating clerk. The clerk had thrown the dog into the street and set it running with a kick, when Joe reached the foot of the stairs. Joe was just in time to see the kick. His head went hot at the sight, and before he realized what he was doing, he had struck the clerk full in the breast. The clerk was angry. For an instant he looked as though he would return the blow. Then he got his temper in hand and said sternly, "Go back and dress yourself, and then get out of here. Don't you ever let me see you again."

Joe went slowly up-stairs. Gradually he calmed down and began to think. He saw that he had been wrong. He swallowed his pride and went down to the office.

"I'm sorry I hit you," he said. "Please forgive me. I got hot-headed."

"You can't stay here any longer," said the clerk. "You're too dangerous. Get your things and go."

In vain did Joe plead. When at last he saw that his entreaties were of no use, he sadly got together the few articles that he owned, and went out into the world

again. The lodging-house was like home to him now. But it was not the thought of leaving this familiar spot, nor fear of facing the cold world, that brought the blinding tears into Joe's eyes as he swung the door shut behind him and said farewell to the Lurie. It was the realization that again he had proved unworthy of his Big Brother's confidence. He must go to him and tell him that he had once more disgraced himself. With a heavy heart and leaden feet, he turned his face toward Broadway, to seek his Big Brother in his office and tell him the whole shameful story. Try as he would, it seemed as though he could not keep out of trouble.

CHAPTER XXV

JOE FINDS A NEW BOARDING PLACE

ONLY once before had Joe come to Mr. Everington's office unbidden—on the occasion of his mother's trouble with Hawkins after her visit to the dispensary—and Mr. Everington knew well that some difficulty must be behind this visit also. So once again he laid his work aside and had Joe admitted to his private office.

Joe came in shamefaced and confused, his eyes on the floor. Mr. Everington looked at him keenly, but said nothing. He waited for Joe to speak. Presently Joe looked up and the tears were rolling down his cheeks.

"I can't live at the lodging-house no longer," he faltered. "I hit the clerk—and they put me out—and I want you to forgive me." Then the little head hung down again.

"You struck the clerk, Joe," said Mr. Everington in astonishment, and his tone was severe. "Why did you do that?"

"He kicked my dog and I got hot-headed and hit him," said Joe. "I know I hadn't oughta done it."

"Your dog! I didn't know you had a dog."

"I didn't till yesterday," said Joe. "And the clerk yanked him out of my bed and dragged him downstairs and kicked him into the street, and I got hot-headed and hit him."

In spite of himself Mr. Everington laughed. "A dog in your bed, Joe!" he said. "I don't wonder the clerk threw him out. That's no place for a dog."

"But he hadn't oughta kicked him," said Joe, "and where else could I keep him? If I'd left him on the streets he'd been lost again. And then maybe some more boys would have put a can on his tail——" Joe stopped in confusion. He had not meant to tell his Big Brother anything about his fight for the dog.

"Did some one tie a can to his tail, Joe?" asked Mr. Everington.

Joe answered "Yes," but volunteered nothing further.

"And how did you get him if there was a can on his tail? Dogs usually run under such circumstances."

"They didn't get it on," said Joe. "I made 'em quit." The little head was bowed again, for Joe knew the whole disgraceful story was coming out now.

"What did you do to make them stop, Joe?"

"I—I—had a fight," said Joe.

"And took the dog away from them?"

"I was goin' to, but the cop come."

"What did he do? Arrest the boys with the can?"

"He pinched"—there was a long pause—"me."

"What!" said Mr. Everington, sitting straight up in astonishment. "You arrested again!"

"Yes," said a very faint voice, "and that's what I'm here for."

"You want me to get you out of trouble again, eh?" and the lawyer's voice was very stern.

"No," said Joe, his head still down. "I ain't in trouble. The cop let me go. I want you to forgive me." And now the tears welled freely from the lad's eyes, and the forlorn little face was raised appealingly. "You said I would disgrace you if I got into trouble again."

"Bless my heart!" ejaculated the lawyer, drawing his handkerchief and blowing his nose vigorously. "Bless my heart!" And for a minute or two that was all he trusted himself to say.

Joe misunderstood the silence. "Won't you—please?" he sobbed.

Mr. Everington reached out and drew the lad close to him. "There is nothing to forgive, Joe," he said, "except perhaps your blow at the clerk. And he is the one you ought to ask to forgive that."

"I did," said Joe, "and he wouldn't."

"You did?" said Mr. Everington in surprise, for

well he knew the fire of Joe's temper. "I'm glad you were sorry."

"I wasn't," said Joe. "I wish I'd knocked his head off."

"Then why did you ask his forgiveness?"

"For you," said Joe. "I wanted him to take me back so I wouldn't disgrace you."

After a time the lawyer said, "What are you going to do for a boarding place now, Joe?"

Joe laughed. Now that he was assured of his Big Brother's pardon, he could feel light at heart once more.

"I don't know," said Joe, "but there's plenty of places to sleep."

"Well, I know what you are going to do, Joe," rejoined the lawyer. "Your school begins to-morrow. You'll be a full time pupil now, and you can't earn enough by selling newspapers after school hours to pay for your board. Also it is quite evident that you can't keep out of trouble on the streets. So you've got to get a new boarding-house and find some new job for your time after school that will support you."

Joe looked very grave. He began to think hard. After a little he peeped up at Mr. Everington. The latter was smiling broadly at him.

"Don't puzzle your head about it any longer, Joe," he said. "I've made up my mind about the whole

matter. You are to live at the Working Boys' Home and you are to work in my office after school hours. It will cost you two dollars and a half a week for your board. I'm going to pay you two dollars a week wages and give you the money for your car-fares. That's all you are worth. But I will advance you fifty cents a week extra and you can pay it back to me in like amounts when you get your working papers and find a job." And then he added, "If you are going to champion the cause of every stray dog that comes along, it is high time I had you under my eye."

Joe grinned sheepishly. "I don't care," he said, "they hadn't oughta done it."

"Your sentiments are all right, Joe," said Mr. Everington, "but I can't say as much for your language."

Again Joe grinned sheepishly. "They had not ought to have done it," he said slowly. "How's that?"

"It is so bad, Joe," replied Mr. Everington, "that when I become your boss to-morrow afternoon, I'm going to see to it that you spend every minute when you are not doing office work studying grammar. And see here, Joe, I want you to understand that when you come here as office boy you come here to work. I'm not going to be your Big Brother in this office. I'm going to be your boss. And you've got to

earn every cent you get. Now remember ! No tricks, no noise, no dilly-dallying, and ”—with a smile—“ no yellow dogs.”

Thus once more was a brotherly hand reached out in a moment of trouble to this sturdy son of liberty, and the stumbling little feet were again pointed upward.

CHAPTER XXVI

JOE CHOOSES HIS VOCATION

THE weeks that followed were hard ones for Joe. All day long he toiled at his books in the big schoolroom. He labored hard and diligently. He saw that this was the means to his end. And so busy was he with his studies that he actually kept out of mischief. That is, he did not get into any very serious mischief. Mr. Everington had seen to it that his new teacher—for Joe had advanced to a higher grade—was made acquainted with Joe's history and the struggle he was making to reunite his family. And this teacher, older and wiser than the other, rigidly held Joe to his work, yet handled him so tactfully that he had only kind feelings for her.

After school each day Joe reported for duty at his Big Brother's office. Here he had, if anything, to be more quiet and orderly than in school. It was a great tax on the lad. Always brimming with life and spirits, ever eager for fun and mischief, and accustomed by months of irresponsible existence on the streets to going his own sweet way, he found the new order of things almost more than he could endure.

After his long hours in the stuffy schoolroom he wanted to be out in the open air. He wanted to limber up his legs that had been cramped under a desk all day. He wanted to fill his lungs with the fresh air from the river. He missed the excitement of the streets, the thrill of competition in the sale of his newspapers, the stir and tingle of the blood that comes from close association with the life of a great city. But none of these things was possible. He was as far removed from the life he had known—the old life that he now loved and longed for—as though he had been transported bodily to some distant land. He had suddenly become, as it were, an anchorite in a busy world.

To be sure, he spent but a short time each day—never more than three hours—in Mr. Everington's office; but those hours came at the fag-end of the day, when both his brain and his nerves were tired by close application in school, and his body craved the freedom and the activity to which he had been accustomed. So for many weeks Joe found this new situation so irksome that it seemed to him that he could not endure it. Indeed nothing but the great love he felt for his employer would ever have kept him faithful during that first trying period.

As for Mr. Everington, he was extremely desirous that Joe should like the new arrangement. He foresaw that Joe would miss his old out-of-doors freedom,

and gave his office manager orders to send Joe on errands as often as possible; and often Mr. Everington devised an errand expressly to give Joe a taste of liberty. Under no circumstances was the office manager to act hastily with Joe or treat him harshly if he proved remiss. By this Mr. Everington did not intend that Joe was to be relieved from office discipline. In fact he meant to keep Joe under the strictest discipline, but that discipline he meant to oversee himself. He appreciated so thoroughly the tender sensitiveness of Joe's nature that he would not trust the enforcement of discipline to another. Mr. Everington knew that he could say to Joe what nobody else in the world could say, unless it were Joe's mother, without driving the little heart to desperate rebellion. Joe was like a restive colt. For his own good he needed to be broken to harness. Mr. Everington was determined that he should be broken thoroughly, but not by a strangling lariat about the windpipe. He was going to do it himself with kindness.

Joe had been office boy for his Big Brother perhaps four weeks before he felt the first touch of that kindly, firm hand in the breaking process. It was the middle of October. A cool spell had been followed by a glorious period of balmy autumn weather like Indian summer. The air came fresh and clear off the Bay. There was tonic in breeze and sunshine. There was

joy in the blue sky above. There was happiness in mere existence.

And Joe, faring forth on an errand, found himself presently near the Battery, where the sea breezes brought the color to his cheeks, and the swelling waves of the harbor seemed to beckon to him. He lost all sense of time and place, forgot his errand, and lingered on the great sea-wall in the complete oblivion of perfect happiness. When, finally, he came to himself with a realization of what he had done, he found to his dismay that the day was almost gone and the message he had been sent to deliver still rested in his pocket. He knew the message was important and his heart smote him. He sped to his destination and just managed to make delivery before that office closed. Then with heavy feet he dragged himself back to his Big Brother's office.

Joe found his employer all alone. The others had gone home. Mr. Everington called Joe into his own office, and sitting there almost in darkness, for Mr. Everington switched off all the lights save a dim lamp on his desk, Joe passed through one of those intense periods which burn themselves into the brain by the white heat of emotion. Mr. Everington spoke very slowly, almost guardedly. He was trying to crush down the fierce anger that burned in his heart. For Joe's delinquency had set his business seriously awry.

In grave, low tones he told Joe exactly what harm his unfaithfulness had caused.

“It is seldom that any one of us has a chance to do great deeds, Joe,” said Mr. Everington, “and so we come to despise the little ones and think them unimportant. Joe, there couldn’t be any great deeds at all if it weren’t for the little ones they are built up on. Everything in this world that is worth while is made up of little things. Little things are like the bricks in a house. Compared to the finished structure a brick is a very tiny object. You might think you could leave out bricks here and there and do no harm. But if you did, your house would soon come tumbling down. That’s what you have done to my business to-day, Joe, by your carelessness. You have left out a brick. And I do not know now whether the entire wall is going to fall down or not. If it does, Joe, it will cost me some thousands of dollars.”

Joe was aghast at the idea. His misery made him dumb. After a pause, Mr. Everington broke the silence—a silence that to Joe was even worse than his Big Brother’s accusing voice.

“You know what it means to little boys and girls when their father dies, Joe,” said Mr. Everington.

Joe silently nodded his head.

“I’m going to tell you a story about a man who didn’t do as he was told to do, and the effect his diso-

bedience had on some little children. That man was General Charles Lee, one of Washington's officers. Washington had starved the British out of Philadelphia by his awful sacrifices at Valley Forge, and the British were fleeing across New Jersey when Washington overtook them at Monmouth and had a splendid chance to capture the entire British army. If he had captured it, the war might have ended then, and no more men been killed. But General Lee retreated instead of attacking as he had been ordered to do, and Washington was lucky to escape a defeat. The British got away, the war went on, and hundreds of men were killed who would not have been killed if the war had ended after Monmouth. So hundreds of little boys and girls were made orphans, Joe, and a good many of them had just as hard a time to get a living as you have had—all because one man didn't do as he was told to do.

“There are other boys I could have sent with that message, Joe, but I chose you because I had faith in your loyalty and obedience. What I want—what the world wants—is some one who can be trusted, some one who will see that the orders are carried out to the letter. Here is the kind of man that is needed. Listen!” And pulling from his desk a pamphlet, Mr. Everington read to Joe the story of the “Message to Garcia.”

It was a clever stroke. All the misery, the despair, the self-condemnation that had been torturing Joe's little soul gradually resolved themselves, as the story proceeded, into a new form—determination. And that determination had as its inspiration the man who carried the message to Garcia. By the time the story was concluded, the new resolution was shining in Joe's face.

“Won't you give me another chance?” he begged.

“How can I trust you again, Joe?” asked Mr. Everington.

“Give me a chance and I'll show you,” answered Joe.

“And if I do,” said Mr. Everington, “will you do exactly what I tell you to do? Will you see that my orders are carried out, no matter what the obstacles are? Will you be as faithful as the messenger to Garcia?”

“Yes, yes,” pleaded Joe, impulsively. “Try me and see.”

By this time the anger in the lawyer's heart had burned itself out. Again a smile of affection came into his eyes, and he reached out his great hands for the little ones that were longing to grasp them.

“Very well, Joe,” he said. “Henceforth you are my messenger to Garcia. My first order to you is that you come home with me to dinner to-night. After dinner we can finish that book we started last time.”

So the two left the office together, but they were not the same two who had entered it some time before. Seared deep in Joe's brain was the memory of this eventful day, and a resolve that permeated every nerve and fibre of his being. He had been through a fiery furnace, and come out, as it were, remoulded ; for on beings with Joe's spiritual organization, such influences are persistent. As for Mr. Everington, his spiritual growth kept pace with Joe's. He had been a factor in most of the crises of Joe's life these two years past, and the influences that had uplifted Joe had broadened him. If he had directed Joe's footsteps, his own had none the less surely been guided by Joe. It is written that a little child shall lead them. And Joe had led Meredith Everington away from the narrow emptiness of his old life. Long since the lawyer had learned to see something more in the world than a dollar and things that were more precious than rubies.

Fortunately Joe's forgetfulness did not prove to be as disastrous as Mr. Everington had feared it might, and in the end the matter was cleared up satisfactorily. When Mr. Everington found that no loss would follow Joe's delinquency, he told the little fellow so, for Joe was obviously worried about the affair. That lifted a burden from Joe's heart, but in no wise altered his improved behavior. Indeed it was almost pitiful to see how manfully he strove to repress his natural in-

instincts toward mischievous play, and how faithful he was in carrying out every commission entrusted to him.

His efforts to improve his speech and manners were almost laughable, so earnest were they. Mr. Everington was as good as his word about the grammar, and Joe had daily to spend a few minutes becoming better acquainted with his native tongue. In this respect he got more from hearing others talk than from the perusal of his book. He had determined that he would learn to speak in a manner befitting "nice folks"—for Joe was becoming possessed of the idea that he was going to climb up in the world.

Just as he observed and patterned after the speech of his betters, so he copied their manners. He learned to keep his finger nails clean, his hair well combed, his person neat and tidy. This was well, for he was just reaching that period in life when new impulses were springing up within him. He was approaching manhood, and the habits that he acquired now would probably prove lasting ones.

As the cold weather came on, he was better content to remain in the office. Seeing this, Mr. Everington gave orders that Joe should not be sent out except when it was really necessary. To occupy Joe's time when he was not busy with business matters, Mr. Everington brought to his office a few good books that he thought might interest Joe. These he put where

Joe could have access to them. Among them he unobtrusively stuck some very simple treatises on the law, for in his heart he hoped that Joe would desire to become a lawyer. Then the lad could continue on in his own office and his future would be assured. But the law books were the very ones Joe disliked—the only ones, in fact. He liked the biographies. He was interested in the histories. But the law books were as dreary to him as a collection of dry bones.

So passed the winter, and so drew near the spring; and with every passing day Mr. Everington became more anxious. He had come to love Joe dearly. The little lad was blossoming out so handsomely, growing so sturdily, becoming such a dependable helper, that Mr. Everington did not like the thought of having him pass from under his own protecting eye and go out once more to face life alone—especially at his age. From time to time Joe spent an evening at his Big Brother's home. Sometimes he went to the theatre with the Everingtons. Whenever it was possible Mr. Everington spent a Saturday at the country club, and Joe was his caddie. The lad needed these days in the open, for his confinement was fast taking the roses out of his cheeks.

On these occasions Mr. Everington always paid Joe extra for his services; and as his wages had been raised to three dollars a week, Joe soon squared up his indebt-

edness to his Big Brother. Mr. Everington's object in paying Joe so little at first was to make him understand that he must earn his own way. The increase to three dollars followed Joe's hard efforts in the weeks after his delinquency with the message. In April Joe was given four dollars a week. And at each increase, Mr. Everington gave him to understand that he had received the increase only because he had won it. If Joe found his confinement irksome, he also saw that his efforts were counting, and that slowly but surely he was forging ahead. This made him happy.

A few days after Joe's wages had been increased to four dollars Joe said to his employer, "How long was it after you came to New York before you got four dollars a week?"

Mr. Everington was silent a moment, then said, "Two years and four months, as nearly as I can recall, Joe."

Joe's face fell. "I've been here two years and six months," he said. Presently he smiled. "I ain't so much behind you, am I?" he said. Then he asked, "How much did you earn in ten years? You said it was an awful lot."

Mr. Everington told him.

Joe looked troubled. "I can't never earn that much," said he despondently.

They were in Mr. Everington's office. An idea came

to the lawyer. "Sit down, Joe," he said. When Joe had found a seat, he said, "That is why I am so anxious to have you choose an occupation, Joe. This is an age of specialists, and only the man of special training can earn large rewards. I succeeded because I very early picked out my work and bent all my energies to get ready for it. I want you to choose your work as soon as you can, so that you can get ready. I have been hoping that you would like the law. Then I could help you, Joe. Besides, a successful lawyer earns more money than most other men."

Joe made a wry face. "I don't like law," he said.

"Why not?"

"I tried to read some of your books. I don't like 'em. There's nothing but big words in 'em. What's the use of the law, anyhow?"

"Joe," said Mr. Everington, "the law is the greatest thing in the world. It is the only thing that makes it possible for us to earn a living and keep what we earn after we get it. It protects the weak from the strong. Our government, our homes, are built on the law. The law protects us at every turn." Mr. Everington was thoughtful for a moment. "Joe," he continued, "you ride on the street-cars a great deal. Did you ever happen to be on a car and have the conductor lock the door and refuse to let you out until you had paid him ten cents?"

"No," said Joe.

"Why do you suppose the conductor never did that? He'd like to get an extra nickel from you, wouldn't he? And he's big enough to do it. Why didn't he?"

"I don't know," said Joe.

"I'll tell you," replied Mr. Everington. "It was because of the law. The law says the fare shall be five cents. If he had charged you ten cents, you could have had him arrested."

Joe was interested.

"Tell me this, Joe," continued the lawyer. "Why was your mother able to go to the hospital and be treated when she was sick and had no money to pay a doctor?"

"You did that," replied Joe.

"No, I didn't. The law did it. The law says that any poor person is entitled to treatment. I merely got your mother a letter to the superintendent so he would be kind to her. And tell me this, Joe—what made Hawkins give your mother money each week after we found out about you?"

"I don't know," said Joe. "I never could size it up."

"Well, I'll size it up for you. It was the law. Judge Wilmot sent his probation officer to interview Hawkins and threatened to have him arrested if he didn't provide for his family."

Joe's eyes opened wide.

"And who was it saved your sister Helen and made Hawkins stop abusing your mother on the street?"

"The cops," answered Joe.

"And what makes the cops? The law. The law says there shall be policemen to protect people."

"Sometimes they pinch the wrong fellow," interposed Joe.

"Just as you sometimes make mistakes, Joe. But the law provides for courts and judges to see that no wrong is done in the end, and the law provides for lawyers to protect the rights of persons who may be falsely arrested."

"Is that what the law is?" inquired Joe, in deep astonishment. "I thought lawyers tried to put people into jail so they could get money out of 'em."

"Perhaps some of them do, Joe. There are dishonest lawyers just as there are dishonest merchants and dishonest newsies. But to be an honest lawyer, Joe, and look out for people's rights, and keep people from being harmed, is one of the finest things a man can do."

Joe was deeply impressed. He went around all day with a thoughtful face. At closing time he came to Mr. Everington with one of the law books he had condemned.

"Do you think I could learn all the words in it?" he asked.

Mr. Everington laughed. "When you were a baby, Joe," he said, "you didn't know a single word, did you? See how many you know now. And you are only a little boy. By the time you are twenty-one you can know all the words in that book and as many more, if you want to."

"Then I'm going to be a lawyer," said Joe. And so was settled the destiny of the little fugitive from the coal barge.

CHAPTER XXVII

A BREATHING SPELL IN THE COUNTRY

BY this time spring was at hand, and Joe's days in school were numbered. He had become keenly interested in his studies, and no longer was eager for the day of his deliverance from the schoolroom. On the contrary, he did not want to leave school. He had gotten along so well, he had made so many friendships among the boys in his class, he had become so fond of his teacher, that the thought of dropping out gave him a little wrench at the heart. If he could but finish out the year, he would be in much better position to continue his schooling, should opportunity for further study offer, or to take up new work in a night school. For though the law allowed Joe to go to work at fourteen, it compelled him to continue his schooling in the evenings. Some of these feelings Joe communicated to Mr. Everington. To have Joe continue in school was what Mr. Everington greatly desired ; but Joe had ever been so eager to go to work that Mr. Everington had not suggested it. He was much gratified when Joe now told him how he felt. So it was arranged that Joe should continue at school until the term

ended. Meantime he, of course, continued as office boy for his Big Brother after school hours.

As the days passed and the warm weather came on, the effect of confinement became more and more noticeable in Joe. His cheeks became steadily whiter, and though he grew fast he lacked that rugged appearance that had characterized him in the old days on the streets. He appeared frail. He seldom had the opportunity these days to run errands, for he was making himself very valuable about the office.

He had a way with him that visitors liked, and so he more and more was trusted to meet those entering the office and inquire as to their business. He had formed the habit of seeing that things were kept in their places. No one had ever suggested this to him, but he had begun the practice after seeing how greatly annoyed Mr. Everington was on a certain occasion when one of his directories was mislaid. Then and there the observant Joe saw an opportunity to be of service. He made mentally an inventory of all the office equipment, found where each book or other article belonged, and thereafter saw to it that each was in its place. If a stenographer used a directory and carelessly laid it on a chair instead of returning it to its case, Joe quietly picked up the book and put it in place. In like manner he saw to it that ink-wells were filled, pens renewed, pencils sharpened, blotters supplied, and stationery

kept up in the desks. He saw to it that letters were promptly mailed. Likewise he tried to learn all he could about the business. At first this was little enough, but he soon discovered the names of people and firms with whom Mr. Everington regularly did business, and learned their addresses. He had an unfailing memory for faces, and he learned to remember names accurately.

All these traits made him increasingly valuable. He never forgot the talk his Big Brother had given him after his delinquency with the message; and understanding that great things were not for him, he strove to be faithful in little ones. Throughout all his work, and in all that he did, there was coming more and more into evidence the spirit of the man who carried the message to Garcia.

Early in May word came from the hospital that Henry was so greatly improved that he could be discharged at any time. The superintendent also said that if Henry could be sent to the country, where he could have good milk and eggs and fresh vegetables to eat, and where he could play out-of-doors in the sunshine, it would do wonders for him in the way of making his frail little body sturdy. This was good news, but it gave Mr. Everington some anxiety at first, for it meant that he would have to look after Henry's welfare as well as Joe's. Henry must both be kept out of mischief and be placed in an environment that would

help him. To accomplish the first object he would have to be employed at something, and that something should support him—for Mr. Everington held firmly to the idea that every human being who was able to do so ought to earn his own living. And deformed feet were in no wise a bar to the accomplishment of this end. The great difficulty was that Henry was untrained in any occupation save that of selling papers, and Mr. Everington did not intend to let him drift back again to the harmful influence of the streets. So he pondered in perplexity over Henry's situation.

After all it is an ill wind that brings no good. Mr. Everington shortly found that it would be necessary for him and his wife to spend the summer months far from New York. Ordinarily he went to his summer place on Long Island Sound, whence he could come to business. Now he was going to the far West for the entire summer. This fact, and the need of both Henry and Joe for a season in the open, decided his course at once. He would send the two lads to his farm in central New York. There they would be out of harm's way, and the fresh air and sunshine would bring strength to Henry and put the roses back in Joe's cheeks. When he had fully matured his plan, Mr. Everington called Joe into his office.

"Joe," he said, "I am going away soon for three months."

The little face before him became grave and doleful. "Won't I see you while you're gone?" asked Joe.

Mr. Everington laughed, but in his heart he was well pleased. It was quite evident that Joe would miss him.

"No," he said. "I am going far away. But I think you will not feel lonely. You are going away, too."

"With you?" asked Joe eagerly.

"No, Joe. With your brother. The hospital superintendent writes me that Henry may leave at any time, but that he needs to be out in the open. You need to be there yourself, Joe. You are as pale as a ghost. So while I am in the West, for that's where I am going, you and Henry are to be at my farm up state."

Joe's eyes began to dance. Often had Mr. Everington told him of this farm, with its pleasant, shaded house, its cool stretches of woodland with a brook babbling among the trees, and the swift-flowing river in the distance, backed by towering hills. He had always wanted to visit it, for he was sure that it must be like Alabama. Now he could hardly contain himself for joy.

"Do you mean it?" he cried, but the question was purely a rhetorical one. "And how long are we going to be there?"

"Three months," said Mr. Everington.

"Gee whiz! Three months!" cried Joe, and forgetting time and place, this erstwhile model office boy gave voice to a whoop that startled the entire office.

"Yes, three months," said Mr. Everington, "but you needn't think it is going to be a picnic. You've got to earn your keep. And you've got to pay Henry's way, too."

The little face became serious at once.

"It isn't as bad as it sounds, Joe," said the lawyer, a trifle repentant for having dashed the lad's high hopes. "This is what I mean. You and Henry must help the farmer. He has no boys of his own. You can do lots of chores, drive the cows, perhaps tend to the chickens, and save him so much time that he may be able to get along with one less hand than he usually employs for the busy season. If you do that, you will more than pay for your board."

"And can I drive the horses?" inquired Joe.

"I don't know, Joe. The farmer will have to settle that. It will depend upon whether you can be trusted with them."

The little mouth before him tightened grimly, and Mr. Everington smiled with satisfaction as he noticed it. He went on, "But I do not mean that you shall be without money, Joe. I'm going to pay your wages all the time you are on the farm. But don't think I'm giving you the money. You've earned it, Joe. You are

really worth five dollars a week to me, but I wanted to be certain of that fact before I advanced you. Now I'll tell you a secret. I had intended to raise you to five dollars on the first of June, but inasmuch as you are going to the country, you won't get the five dollars until you come back in the fall. I hope it won't ——"

"How long did it take you to earn five dollars?" broke in Joe.

"I can't tell you now," said the lawyer, "and anyway it doesn't matter. What I was going to say was that I hope you will soon be so valuable that I shall have to pay you six dollars. But remember one thing, Joe. You don't get a cent more until you earn it."

"When are we to go to the country?" asked Joe, eagerly.

"Just as soon as your school closes."

"And how long can we stay?"

"Three months—just as long as I am away."

Joe was silent a little while. Then he said softly, "Mr. Everington, could Helen come up to the farm?"

"I have thought of that, too, Joe. I'll see."

He turned to his telephone and called up his friend at the great cloak factory.

"Helen is to have two weeks' vacation in July, with full pay," said Mr. Everington as he swung around in his chair to face Joe again. "She shall spend the two weeks with you and Henry."

Again Joe was silent. Then he burst out, "Are there violets there? And daisies? And holly-trees?"

"I'll let you find out for yourself, Joe," rejoined the lawyer. "The farm is in Otsego County. Suppose you get some maps and books, and read about the place you are going to? You will enjoy your visit more if you know something about the region."

Joe sprang up from his chair. "I will," he said, starting for the door. But just as he was reaching for the door-knob he turned back. "Mr. Everington," he said, "how long *did* it take you to earn five dollars?"

In a very few days school was ended, Mr. Everington and his wife bade Joe good-bye at the great railway station, and a day later Joe and Henry were on their way to Otsego County, whither a letter had preceded them to make smooth their path. Mr. Everington had no intention that Joe and his brother should become farm drudges, and he made no mention in his letter to his farmer of the fact that Joe was supposed to earn his keep by doing chores. Mr. Everington felt certain that Joe would be as helpful as he could, and he knew this would insure the good-will of the farmer. Nor was he mistaken.

Farmer Peebles had received Mr. Everington's letter with little relish. Busy as only a farmer can be during the summer season, he did not welcome the idea of a visit from two city children, who, he felt certain, would

be full of mischief and constantly in the way. His greeting at the station had been blunt enough. But even before the farmhouse was reached, Mr. Peebles found himself relenting. There was something about Joe that always made people like him—he was so fresh and whole-souled, and wisely foolish, as only a city street urchin can be. And he speedily won the heart of both Farmer Peebles and his wife. As for Henry, every one felt for him the pity that is the due of a cripple. Mr. Peebles speedily concluded that “they wouldn’t be so bad after all.” But when Joe took upon himself the task of keeping the wood-box filled, of feeding the hens and gathering the eggs, of fetching the vegetables from the garden for dinner, and a score of other little tasks that took time, Mr. Peebles was pleased beyond expression.

“That boy ain’t no city kid,” was his comment, “even if he does come from New York. He’s too dang smart.”

But though Joe literally tried to carry out his Big Brother’s wish in the way of being useful, his tasks took relatively little of his time, and he and Henry played for hours at a stretch on the shady grass plot in front of the house, whence could be seen the gently sloping valley and the swelling river. Together the lads made long excursions to the woods, where they found the violets Joe had inquired about, and many an-

other woodland blossom that filled them with delight. All over the farm they wandered. They went through the barns and the mows, they made friends with the horses and cattle, and they scratched the grunting pigs with corn-cobs. In next to no time they knew every nook and corner of the place and every living creature on it, even to the catbirds and thrushes nesting in the thickets by the river, and the little phoebe that was raising a family under the eaves of the pig-pen. And speedily strength came to Henry's weak limbs, and Joe began to fill out and his cheeks to redden. Never were two children happier. Joe wanted his Big Brother to know about it. He had been at the farm only a few days when he wrote to Mr. Everington, who was now at the other edge of the continent.

"Gee whiz! but it is nice here," he wrote. "The days are fine and the sunshine is out every day. We was in the woods yesterday and we scared up two scunks. To-day I hung up a pair of stockings to get dry that I got wet in the woods and I forgot all about them and they burned up and I had to put on a new pair. Saturday we went in swimming and the water was freezing cold. Have you had a swim yet this year? We have planted lots of things.

"You said I could drive the horses if Mr. Peebles would let me. I am sure they won't run away with me. We are good friends. Henry and me play hide-

and-see in the barn and once I hid under Tom's stomach. Tom is a horse. I am sure he would let me drive him. Mr. Peebles says he is cross but I don't believe it.

"I had a letter from Helen. She says she is anxious to get up here. I wrote and told her all about the scunks we saw and the fine swimming and she wants to come. There is a feeby hatching some little ones under the roof of the pig-pen. She sent us a checker-board and some checkers.

"I brought along the grammar you gave me. You didn't ask me to but I knew you would like to have me. Well, I haven't touched it. I guess I am getting lazy. But I think it does anybody good to be once in a while for when you wake up you go like sixty. But my laziness don't last long. I get to dreaming. Sometimes my mind wanders and I can't help it. But I think I am improving in spelling and writing, don't you?

"We get milk to drink here three times a day. I like it. It don't look like the milk we get at the boarding-house. It is yellow. I guess they must have a different kind of cows from the kind the city milkman has."

In due time Joe received a letter from the Pacific coast, or rather letters, for Mrs. Everington had written a note to go with her husband's. They both said they

had enjoyed Joe's letter. They would have been strange mortals if they had not. And they hoped Joe would write to them often.

The woods and the river were altogether too insistent in their call to allow Joe to become an active correspondent, but he occasionally had a letter writing spell, and then he would send notes to his mother and his Big Brother, and sometimes to persons in Mr. Everington's office. Late in the summer he wrote this letter to Mr. Everington. Mr. Everington had just sent him two baseball gloves.

"I do not know how to put my words into thanks. But my stars they are certainly fine. I bet I can catch a fly with my eyes shut. The boys in the village near here are getting up a nine. Maybe I can get a place on it now. I am the only boy who has two gloves. How did you know I wanted a glove?"

"You said my pay was to go on, but I didn't get none since I came up here. I need some money. I need some new shoes. I was climbing a tree and got my foot caught in a crotch and the sole came off. And I want to buy a piccolo. The boys in the village are getting up a band and they want me to join. I am learning notes now. I like it better than grammar. When I come back to New York maybe I can play for you. And I am all out of envelopes and writing paper.

"I have my ideas about the Christian religion. Last week we played a game of ball with another team. We got to playing and you ought to have heard them swear. I never thought New York boys were anywhere near as bad as this.

"Helen came up Tuesday. She has got fat. She says she likes it very much, but I can't get her to do anything. She won't climb trees or hunt scunks or go for bullfrogs but just lays in the hammok and reads a book. She says it is so restful. I get enough rest at night. But she likes it very much. Ain't girls funny?

"You wouldn't know me if you saw me. Mr. Peebles says I am an inch taller and I weigh eleven pounds more than when I came. I think it is the milk. We have all we can drink. And Mrs. Peebles makes such good fritters and ginger cakes. I never eat any fritters so good. Last night I had fourteen for supper, and she said she was afraid I would bust but I could eat more if she had had them. My clothes are getting tight.

"I like it here very much, but I do not think I would like to be a farmer. You don't see enough people. When I lived on the *Mattie Ford* I used to want to get back to the country and now I am in the country I shall be glad to get back to the city. I think it is because I don't have enough to do here.

There ain't much to do but play though I do all they will let me and I am getting too big to play all the time. I guess my views have broadened out since I've been here. I have been thinking about what you told me about lawyers and I think that is the finest thing in the world to help other people just as you helped me. You needn't worry about my becoming a farmer. In this world of sorrow and hardship we need somebody to do good. Lawyers can do more than most anybody else. I am glad I am going to be a lawyer. But I wish there wasn't so many big words to learn.

"I want to get back to work and earn that five dollars. If I had not come up here I should have earned five dollars sooner than you did. But now I cannot get it until September. Maybe I can catch up to you on six dollars. How soon did you earn six dollars?

"Henry is doing fine. His feet are getting strong. Helen went home when her two weeks was up. She says she liked it better than any place she ever was. I think it did her good. Mrs. Peebles cried when she went home. I thought she liked Helen. She was kinder to her than she is to Henry and me. And she lets us eat between meals.

"When am I to go home? I think Henry would like to stay here. He loves the horses and pigs and they like him.

“How is Mrs. Everington? I would like to see her. Give her my love. I hope you are well. I have nothing more to say.

“Your affectionate Little Brother,

“JOE WAINRIGHT.”

CHAPTER XXVIII

A DREAM COME TRUE

BEFORE this letter reached California, the Everingtons had started for New York, so that Joe's communication went across the continent and back again before it reached Mr. Everington. Meantime much had occurred that was of moment to Joe. Among his letters Mr. Everington found one from the Otisville hospital authorities. They wrote that Mrs. Hawkins was so far recovered as to be able to leave the hospital; and that although continued treatment there would doubtless add to her strength, yet, with returning health, she had begun to fret and worry so over her absence from her children that she probably would be better off if she were to rejoin them, even if the surroundings were not so favorable as at the sanitarium. Another note came to Mr. Everington—this one from Judge Wilmot—carrying the information that Hawkins had fallen overboard while drunk and had been swept under a pier and drowned before any one could get to him.

Busy as he was with accumulated work, the lawyer decided that he would settle Joe's affairs the first thing.

That done he could give his mind to his work without distraction. So he ran up to the Children's Court to see the Judge.

"I'm delighted to see you back," said His Honor. "Doubtless you got my note. I wasn't sure that you had returned, but I sent the note anyway."

"Just arrived yesterday," said Mr. Everington. "I've got no end of work on my desk, but I want to get this matter off my mind before I tackle it. Tell me about Hawkins."

The Judge told him briefly how the barge captain had lost his life.

"Poor fellow! I always felt sorry for him," said Mr. Everington. "If he could have let alcohol alone he'd have been a good man. But he's gone now. Our concern is with his family. There is this about his death—it makes it possible for the family to have a home again. The mother is now well enough to leave the hospital and is anxious to be with her children. This is what Joe has been dreaming about ever since he ran away from the coal barge, but I was always afraid that if the family established a home Hawkins would break into it. You never can tell what these drunken brutes will do. It seems to me that the best thing that can be done now is to reunite the family. What is your opinion? That's what I came to talk about."

“By all means,” replied the Judge. “Where there is a good mother that is the best place for the children. And if the children love their mother, there is little danger of their going wrong. That is our experience here. And one of our greatest problems is to find ways to keep the home intact. But can these children support a home yet?”

“I bumped into Mr. Dean, head of the cloak firm that employs Helen, when I was going to luncheon this noon, and I asked how the girl was getting along. She is doing excellently. You know they put her in the designing department, and Mr. Dean told me that she has shown so much talent that they are training her to be one of their regular designers. That will pay her well, but, of course, it will be a long time before she is ready. Just now she gets eight dollars a week and on the first of January she is to be advanced to ten dollars. She doesn't know that, of course, and I shall not tell her. Joe's been on my farm all summer but he will be home soon, for I am going to send for him to-day. He will get five dollars a week, and if he continues as he has been doing I shall soon give him six dollars.”

“So you are satisfied with him, eh?” inquired the Judge with a quiet smile.

“Satisfied! Why, Judge, he's the greatest little youngster ever you saw. Really I shouldn't know

what to do without him. I never had an office boy that could compare with him—he keeps everything so orderly and clean. And he's absolutely reliable. It doesn't matter what you tell him to do, he does it, and does it right. You know, Judge, I've long been looking for a partner who can relieve me of part of my work. But I'm particular. If Joe becomes the sort of man he promises to be—but that's a long way ahead."

"He reflects credit upon his teacher," commented the Judge.

"The credit belongs to Joe, not to me," rejoined Mr. Everington. "It's mighty little I have done for him—got him out of trouble once or twice and given him a few lectures, and that's about all. Why, Judge, I don't suppose the time I have given to that boy would average an hour a day. I never cease to wonder at the change in him. But it wouldn't have been possible with any other boy, I am sure. Joe is so unusual."

"What would you say, Mr. Everington, if I were to tell you that nine out of ten boys who come in here are like that—all they need is a friendly hand to guide them and they will make good men."

"I cannot believe it."

"Well, it's true, Mr. Everington. If all the good men in this town would do as you have done, we

should have to close our prisons and reformatories for lack of inmates."

"And you can't get men to help you? That's a shame! Why, I never did anything that gave me so much pleasure as helping Joe——" He stopped abruptly, for the Judge was laughing outright. In a moment Mr. Everington joined in the laughter. "Do you know, Judge," he said, "I had almost forgotten my reluctance to become a Big Brother. You told me I would some day be glad if I helped this youngster. Let me say it now. It's been one of the best things I ever did. I can't begin to tell you what it has meant to me."

The Judge was wise. He smiled and said merely, "I'm very glad."

Mr. Everington rose to go. "I'm glad you approve of the plan to bring the family together. Good-bye."

He went back to his office and wrote a letter to Mrs. Hawkins, telling her to come to New York at once and enclosing her car-fare. He wrote a second letter to Mrs. Kaplan, the good-hearted woman with whom Helen boarded, asking her to take care of Mrs. Hawkins when the latter arrived. A third letter he sent to Joe, instructing him to come to New York in a week and bring Henry with him. Then he buckled down to the pile of letters and documents on the desk before him.

Before the week was ended, Joe's letter came back from the West, and Mr. Everington laughed uproariously as he read it and ended by wiping his eyes. Then came Joe himself, slipping in unannounced one morning and standing before his Big Brother's desk smiling. He had been a true prophet. Mr. Everington had to look twice at the lad before he recognized him. He was appreciably taller, many pounds heavier, stout and strong in appearance, and brown as an Indian. Henry had improved equally in looks. He was with Joe. Mr. Everington pushed his work aside and listened for a few minutes to the torrents of joyful reminiscences that Joe in vain tried to repress.

Presently Mr. Everington said, "I suppose you'll be ready for work again soon, Joe?"

"I'm ready this minute," said Joe. "What can I do?"

"Take this message to Mrs. Kaplan," said the lawyer, "and let Henry go along with you."

He hastily scrawled a note and sealed it in an envelope. His eyes were twinkling, but he said very soberly, "Don't delay with this message. It's important. If you don't hurry you'll be as sorry as once before you were when you dilly-dallied." As Joe and Henry left the room, Mr. Everington called after them, "You needn't be in any hurry about coming back."

They made haste to Mrs. Kaplan's house.

"Mr. Everington says that you want to see my new boarder," said Mrs. Kaplan smiling. "Come with me."

Joe and Henry looked at each other in astonishment. But they followed their guide up a flight of stairs to a room at the front of the house. Mrs. Kaplan knocked.

"Come in," said a voice.

"That's mother," cried Joe. And in an instant the two lads were in their mother's arms.

When Joe got back Mr. Everington called him into his private office. "Joe," he said, "your dream has come true. Your mother is well again. Henry is strong now. And you are all able to work and have a home. I don't want Henry to go on the streets again. I have thought it all out, and this is my plan. You must find a little flat somewhere big enough for you all to live in, and for Henry to have a shop in. He can sell papers and stationery there. You must find a place well located for his trade and convenient to the street-cars so that you and Helen can get to work easily. You take a day or two off and find a place. And by the way, while you are at it, find me another office boy. Jimmy is going to leave and I want some one to take his place. You know the kind of boy I want. See if you can find him."

"I've got him now," said Joe.

Mr. Everington looked interested. "What's his name?" he asked.

"Joe Wainright," said Joe, laughing.

"I don't understand," said Mr. Everington.

"I mean I want the job," said Joe.

"But you have a job already."

"Well, I want this one, too."

"You can't do two jobs, Joe."

"Try me and see. That Jimmy never did any work."

"I think you had better get another boy, Joe."

"Please let me try it—just for a week," begged Joe.

"Very well, for a week then. And if you don't make good, you quit at the end of the week."

"And if I do make good?" demanded Joe.

"Then the job is yours—as long as you continue to make good."

"And how much do I get?" was Joe's next question.

"If you do the work satisfactorily I'll give you eight dollars a week, Joe. I'll save money by the arrangement and you will earn more than any boy of fourteen I ever heard of."

"More than you did at fourteen?" demanded Joe breathlessly.

"Yes, more than I did."

Joe could not restrain himself. He began to dance about and started away singing "Eight dollars a week, eight dollars a week."

"You haven't got that eight dollars yet," Mr. Ever-

ington called after him. "You've got to show me before you get it."

Joe turned back, his countenance sober in an instant. All the intensity of his little soul burned in his face. "I'll earn that eight dollars or—or—bust," he said. Then he went out.

That evening Joe, Henry, Helen, and their mother were together for the first time in many months—a happy little group. There were reminiscences, pleasant and unpleasant, but all enjoyable in the telling. After the unhappy past had been examined and put upon the shelf, as it were, the group turned toward the future that promised so much of happiness. Long into the night they continued their animated discussion as to where the new home should be and what they would have in it. An eavesdropper might have thought the little family had sixty dollars a week at their disposal instead of sixteen—for Helen's eight dollars and the eight that Joe expected to earn were all that they could depend upon, Henry's earnings from his shop existing as yet only in his imagination. Finally they decided upon the general locality in which to try to find a home. As Helen was at work all day and Mrs. Hawkins not strong enough for house hunting, the task of finding the place fell to Joe and Henry. They were to make search the next day and report at evening.

During the day Joe visited the office. Mr. Evering-

ton told him of Hawkins' death. When Joe broke the news at the family council that night, Mrs. Hawkins, after the manner of women, cried a little. Joe tried to comfort her.

"Don't cry, mother," he said. "I'm glad he's gone. He can't never hurt you again."

"I was not thinking of myself, Joe," said Mrs. Hawkins, "but of how unhappy you have all been."

"That's all over now," said Joe. "We're never going to be unhappy any more."

"Very well, Joe," said his mother. "We'll not think about it again. Did you find a flat?"

Joe told them of his search. There was one place that would answer very well. It cost two dollars a month more than they wanted to pay, but they decided to take it anyway. It was a fine location for a news stand and perhaps Henry could earn enough to make the extra expenditure worth while.

When Joe took his mother to see the place, she could not keep the tears back. Humble as the little flat was, it was to be a home, a real home. It seemed too good to be true. Characteristically she expressed her feelings by tears. Joe misunderstood her. He looked disappointed.

"Don't cry, mother," he urged. "I know it ain't very nice, but some day we're going to live in a white house with big pillars in front and have lots of grass

and flowers in a big yard. Don't cry, mother. I'm telling you the truth. Mr. Everington says so. He was poor, too, when he started—and I'm already ahead of him. We won't stay here long, mother—only until I earn more money. And anyway it's better than a coal barge."

"Hush, Joe," said his mother. "You'll break my heart."

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